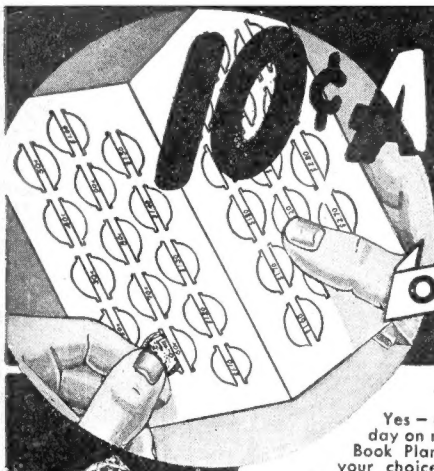
MARCH
ADVENTURE
15 Cents
15¢
Adventure
MAR.
THE FOG OF MARCH FIFTEENTH
A NOVELETTE OF THE BRITISH CHANNEL PATROL
by DURAND KIEFER
MORE THAN THE FLESH
by WILLIAM ASHLEY ANDERSON
ANNIXTER · BUCKLEY · BEDFORD-JONES

10¢ A DAY— buys a Diamond or Famous Watch

On Our NEW SAVINGS BOOK PLAN



Yes — only 10c a day on my Savings Book Plan will buy your choice of these Diamonds or Watches. It's simple — here's how you go about it . . .

WHAT YOU DO:

Send coupon below with a dollar bill and a brief note telling me who you are, your occupation, and a few other facts about yourself. Indicate the watch or diamond you want on coupon, giving number and price.

WHAT I'LL DO:

I'll open an account for you on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN, send the watch or diamond you want for approval and

10-DAY TRIAL

If satisfied, you pay 10 monthly payments. If you are not satisfied after wearing the watch or ring for 10 days, send it back and I'll return your dollar on our

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

A Savings Book will be sent to you to help you save your dime each day. YOU PAY MONTHLY by money order or check. Try this easy, convenient method that has helped thousands to own fine diamonds and watches without burden on the pocketbook or savings. All prices include Federal Tax.

$27.50

A7 — Brilliant Cut Diamond Engagement Ring. 14K yellow gold.
$1 deposit $2.85 a month

both $33

A84—Bridal Set. 8 Brilliant Cut Diamonds. 14K yellow gold.
$1 deposit $3.20 a month

$35.75

D122—Man's Twin Ring. Diamond and simulated blue sapphire. 14K yellow gold. $1 deposit $3.48 mo.

$22

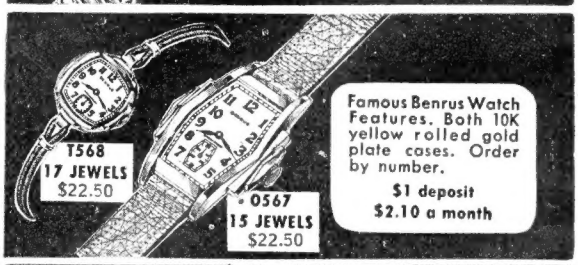
I157—Man's Initial Ring. Diamond; 2 initials on black onyx. 14K yellow gold.
$1 deposit $2.10 a month

FREE TO ADULTS

A postcard brings my complete 48-page catalogue and full details on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN. No Obligation.

P122—Ladies' 10K coral rolled gold plate KENT Watch. 7 jewels. Guaranteed. Extra link bracelet.
$1 deposit $1.83 a month

Bulova Watch Features for Men and Women. Both 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Order by number.
$1 deposit
$3.28 a month



Famous Benrus Watch Features. Both 10K yellow rolled gold plate cases. Order by number.
$1 deposit
$2.10 a month

$27.50

K308 — Waterproof Watch for Service Men. Sweepsecond. 17 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate.
$1 dep. $2.65 a mo.

JIM FEENEY
L. W. Sweet, 1670 Broadway. (Dept. 12-C)
New York, N. Y.

Enclosed find $1 deposit. Send me No._____ Price $_____. I agree to pay the balance in 10 equal monthly payments, otherwise I'll return selection and you will refund my dollar.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____

L. W. Sweet

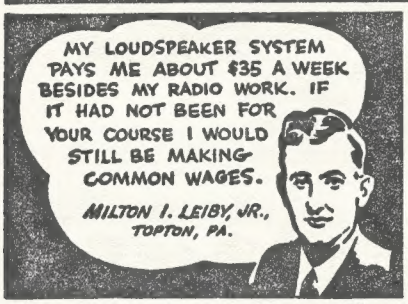
MAIL ORDER DIVISION OF FINLAY STRAUS, Inc.
Dept. 12-C 1670 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

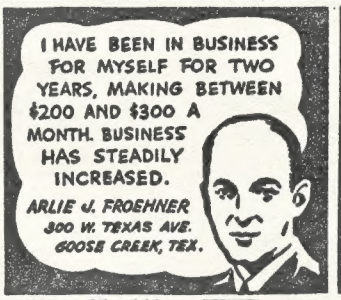
Do You Want Success Like This in RADIO

BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR COURSE I OBTAINED MY RADIO BROADCAST OPERATOR'S LICENSE AND IMMEDIATELY JOINED STATION WMPC WHERE I AM NOW CHIEF OPERATOR.
HOLLIS F. HAYES
327 MADISON ST., LAPEER, MICH.

I WAS WORKING IN A GARAGE WHEN I ENROLLED WITH N.R.I. I AM NOW RADIO SERVICE MANAGER FOR M_____ FURNITURE CO. FOR THEIR 4 STORES.
JAMES E. RYAN
119 PEBBLE COURT
FALL RIVER, MASS.

CLIPPING YOUR COUPON GOT ME STARTED IN RADIO. I AM NOW IN CHARGE OF THE RADIO DEPARTMENT FOR THE AMERICAN AIRLINES AT CLEVELAND.
WALTER B. MURRAY
AMERICAN AIRLINES, MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, CLEVELAND, OHIO.


MY LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM PAYS ME ABOUT $35 A WEEK BESIDES MY RADIO WORK. IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR YOUR COURSE I WOULD STILL BE MAKING COMMON WAGES.
MILTON I. LEIBY, JR.,
TOPTON, PA.


I HAVE BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR MYSELF FOR TWO YEARS, MAKING BETWEEN $200 AND $300 A MONTH. BUSINESS HAS STEADILY INCREASED.
ARLIE J. FROEHNER
300 W. TEXAS AVE.
GOOSE CREEK, TEX.

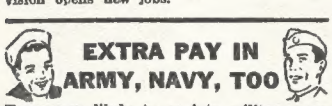
I MAKE $40 A MONTH FIXING RADIOS IN SPARE TIME. I STARTED MAKING EXTRA MONEY 3 MONTHS AFTER BEGINNING THE N.R.I. COURSE AND MADE ABOUT $100 WHILE LEARNING.
WILLIAM CHERMAK
RT. 1, BOX 287
HOPKINS, MINN.

Here's The Formula That Has Worked For Hundreds

If you're looking for a quick way to better pay, and a chance to get a good, permanent job in a field of real opportunity, here's the formula that has worked for the men you see above, and hundreds of others, too It's not a "miracle cure" nor a "long-chance" operation. It is a time-tested, practical way to make $5 to $10 a week extra a few months from now, and to prepare for a full-time job paying up to $50 a week as a Radio Technician or Radio Operator.

Beginners Train at Home to Make $30, $40, $50 a Week

On top of increasing civilian interest in Radio, the Radio Industry is rushing to fill hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Defense Orders. Over 800 Broadcasting stations in the U. S. employ thousands of Radio Technicians and Radio Operators with average pay among the country's best paid industries. Repairing, servicing, selling home and auto Radio receivers (there are more than 50,000,000 in use) gives jobs to thousands. Many other Radio Technicians take advantage of the opportunities to have their own service or retail Radio business. Think of the many good pay jobs in connection with Aviation, Commercial, Police Radio and Public Address Systems. N. R. I. trains you to be ready when Television opens new jobs.



EXTRA PAY IN ARMY, NAVY, TOO

Every man likely to go into military service, every soldier, sailor, marine, should mail the Coupon Now! Learning Radio helps men get extra rank, extra prestige, more interesting duty at pay up to 6 times a private's base pay. Also prepares for good Radio jobs after service ends. IT'S SMART TO TRAIN FOR RADIO NOW!

Many Make $5, $10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

Nearly every neighborhood offers opportunities for a good part-time Radio Technician to make extra money fixing Radio sets. I give you special training to show you how to start cashing in on these opportunities early. You get Radio parts and instructions for building test equipment, for conducting experiments that give you valuable practical experience. You also get a modern Professional Radio Servicing Instrument My fifty-fifty method—half working with Radio parts, half studying my lesson texts—makes learning Radio at home interesting, fascinating, practical.

Find Out How I Train You For Good Pay in Radio

Mail the coupon below. I'll send my 64-page book FREE. It tells about my Course; the types of jobs in the different branches of Radio; shows letters from more than 100 of the men I trained so you can see what they are doing, earning. MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postal.

J. E. Smith, President
Dept. 2CS9, National Radio Institute
Washington D. C.

I Trained These Men at Home *I Will Train You Too*

THIS **FREE** BOOK HAS SHOWN HUNDREDS HOW TO MAKE GOOD MONEY

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 2CS9
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Mail me FREE without obligation, your 64-page book "Rich Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Write plainly.)

Age.....

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

APRIL ISSUE ON SALE MARCH 11TH

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Vol. 106, No. 5 for March, 1942 Best of New Stories

The Fog of March Fifteenth (a novelette) . . . . . DURAND KIEFER 11
For three days and nights of living hell the *Briggs*, old four-stack flushdecker of the U.S.N.—now H.M.S. *Tremaine* of the Channel Patrol—had played cat-and-mouse with the Nazi subs holed up in their Cherbourg base. Then, on the Ides of March, came the gray ghost of fog—and the invasion of England began!

Blow, Bugles! . . . . . H. BEDFORD-JONES 36
The Corsican sultan and his officers had never heard the Arabian proverb which says: "If you meet a Hazrami and a cobra in your path, spare the cobra."

Señor Redhead (a fact story) . . . . . H. P. S. GREENE 47
He got his flaming hair from the Irishman who sired him in Tucson, Arizona. He liked Americans—and Yaqui Indians—but only tolerated Mexicans, though his other parent had been one. Meet Red Lopez, one of the most spectacular characters ever to flourish along the Border.

More Than the Flesh . . . . . WILLIAM ASHLEY ANDERSON 52
Stymied between the devil and the deep Red Sea, Ravenscroft of the King's African Rifles treks his lone way across the Danakil Desert, and discovers the Empire has strange allies in enemy territory—allies that can never be mentioned, even in despatches.

Deep-Water Rat . . . . . PAUL ANNIXTER 68
From the sub-cellars of Singapore to the sewers of Port of Spain old Mus, that arrogant rat-of-the-world had fought, philandered and pilfered his way. An outlaw rodent was Mus, but on his last voyage he atoned for all his sins in a glorious finish.

Swamp Shooter . . . . . JAMES HENRY HOLMES 75
Me and Joe were sitting on 700 pounds of dynamite when we went out in the air-boat to stop the swampfire that day. It was a case of being not too careful—just careful enough—or all us doodlebuggers would be out of a job. Them blasting caps are touchy as hell.

Live by the Sword (2nd part of 4) . . . . . F. R. BUCKLEY 86
In which I, Gaspare Torella, discover I've unwittingly assumed the role of official poisoner to Cesare Borgia, whose soaring ambition to be Caesar indeed, urges him up still another rung of the murder ladder.

The Camp-Fire . . . . . Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 113
Ask Adventure . . . . . Information you can't get elsewhere 6
The Trail Ahead . . . . . News of next month's issue 129
Lost Trails . . . . . Where old paths cross 123

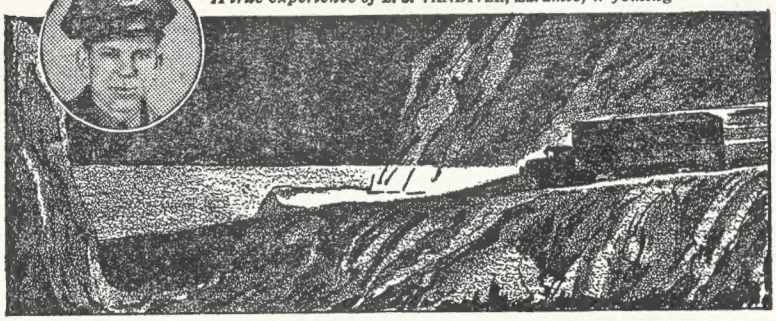
Cover painted for Adventure by Malvin Singer

Kenneth S. White, Editor

Published once a month by Popular Publications, Inc., 2256 Grove Street, Chicago, Illinois. Editorial and executive offices, 205 East Forty-second Street, New York City. Harry Steeger, President and Secretary; Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice President and Treasurer. Entered as Second Class Matter, October 2, 1935, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Yearly subscription $1.50 in advance. Single copy, 15 cents. Foreign postage, $1.00 additional. Subscription Dept., 205 East 42nd St., New York, N. Y.
Trade Mark registered. Copyright, 1942, by Popular Publications, Inc. All rights reserved under Pan American Copyright Convention.
Printed in U. S. A.

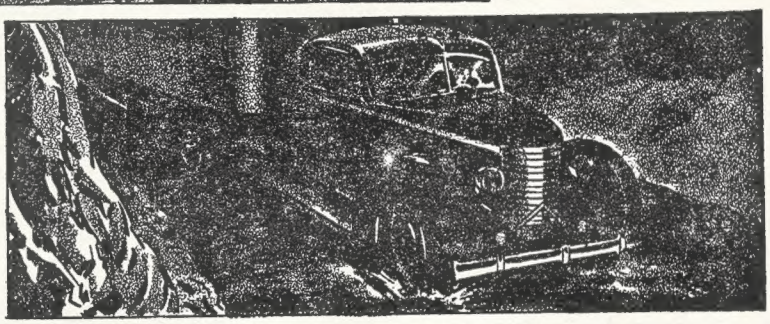
"I RODE A JUGGERNAUT DOWN A CHUTE-THE-CHUTE!"

A true experience of L. S. VANDIVER, *Laramie, Wyoming*



"A WINDING RIBBON of glassy ice faced me as I nosed my big Diesel truck down Telephone Canyon, near Laramie, Wyoming, one dark winter night," writes Mr. Vandiver. "Behind me, on a twenty-eight foot trailer, rode 27,000 pounds of freight.

"WITHOUT WARNING, the lights went out! It was six miles to the bottom of the canyon . . . my left wheels were skirting a precipice . . . and those tons in back of me were shoving—and I mean *shoving*. It would have been suicide to use my brakes.



"I WAS SKIDDING TOWARDS ETERNITY when I remembered my flashlight. Its bright beam flooded the road ahead. Thanks to 'Eveready' *fresh* DATED batteries, I drove the six miles safely, saving not only my life, but the $12,000 truck and its 13½ ton cargo.

(*Signed*) *L. S. Vandiver*"

The word "Eveready" is a registered trade-mark of National Carbon Company, Inc.

FRESH BATTERIES LAST LONGER... *Look for the* DATE-LINE

NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC., 30 EAST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Unit of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation

UCC

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

ARCHERY with reverse English—or Chinese, as the case may be.

Request:—I have heard that the Chinese made bows that were the reverse of the type that we use in the Western world.

From what I gathered from reading, this bow was held so a notch hooked in or near the head of the arrow was hooked in the string and the arrow was held back at the back and pulled back and was shot when released. I would like to know if there is any practical reason for such a bow: i.e. would a bow so made shoot an arrow further than the regular type of bow per pound of string pull?

Anything you can tell me about this will be appreciated. I intend to try something like this on a crossbow if it shows promise of being worth experimenting with.

—George A. Hart,
5043 Blackstone Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

P.S. Maybe I got the whole idea wrong.

Reply by Earl B. Powell:—Either some one has been spoofing you, or else you got the idea entirely wrong on the Chinese bow.

The Chinese bow is a double recorved bow about six feet long of which about a foot on each end is absolutely stiff, and when the bow is drawn fully, the strain is less than at the beginning of the draw on account of the leverage by the two dead ends compressing the bow together. This is no advantage, except for holding the arrow drawn, in fact, it detracts from the range and speed of the bow.

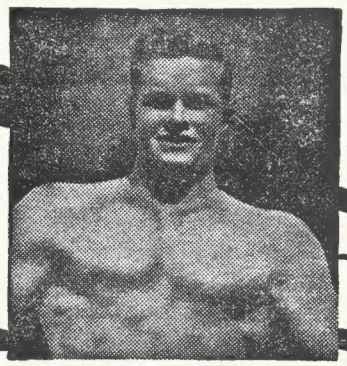
These bows are usually made of a strip of whalebone imbedded in the belly side of the bow which has a core of hard wood, and backed with sinew and often covered with (of all things!) birch bark.

They used arrows about a yard long and these arrows were drawn in the ordinary way of course—except instead of using our release of three fingers, with the arrows resting between the first and second finger, they drew with the thumb, and with the end of the arrow cradled in the space between the thumb and forefinger.

The Tartar bow was made similarly, except that it was shorter and without the ungainly end and had a much longer range. All of these bows were shot in the usual manner. You could not get much distance by shooting in the way you indicate with the bow hindside to the shooter.

(Continued on page 8)

HE Mailed This Coupon



J. G. O'BRIEN
Atlas Champion Cup Winner

This is an ordinary snapshot of one of Charles Atlas' Californian pupils.

CHARLES ATLAS,
115 East 23rd Street,
New York, N. Y.

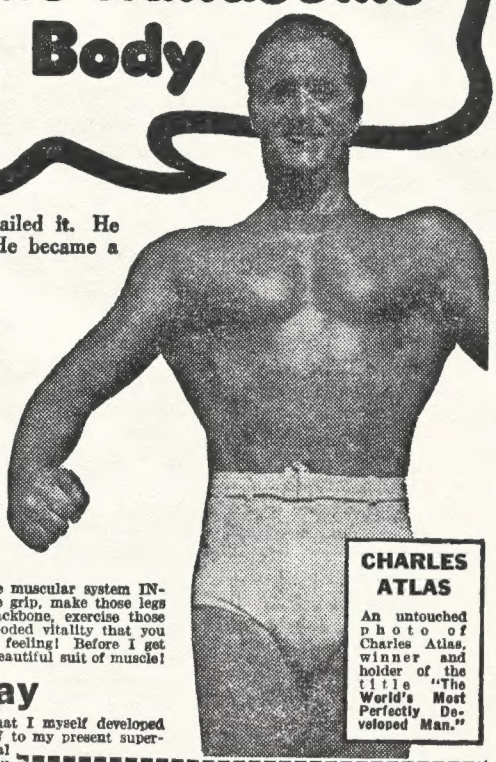
I want proof that your system of DYNAMIC TENSION will make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your FREE BOOK—"Everlasting Health and Strength"—and full details of your 7-DAY trial offer.

J. G. O'Brien
(Please print or write plainly)

ADDRESS 115 East 23rd Street
CITY [illegible] STATE Cal.

This is coupon O'Brien sent to get FREE Book. Yours is below—clip it NOW!

...and Here's the Handsome Prize-Winning Body I Gave Him!



J. G. O'BRIEN saw my coupon. He clipped and mailed it. He got my free book and followed my instructions. He became a New Man. NOW read what he says:

"Look at me NOW! *'Dynamic Tension'* WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"
J. G. O'Brien.

"I'll Prove that YOU, too, can be a NEW MAN"—*Charles Atlas*

I don't care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add SOLID MUSCLE to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—is all the time I ask of you! And there's no cost if I fail.

I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system INSIDE and OUTSIDE; I can add inches to your chest, give you a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

CHARLES ATLAS
An untouched photo of Charles Atlas, winner and holder of the title "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

Only 15 Minutes a Day

"Dynamic Tension!" That's the ticket! The identical *natural* method that I myself developed to change my body from the scrawny, skinny-chested weakling I was at 17 to my present superman physique! Thousands of other fellows are becoming marvelous physical specimens—*my way.* I give you *no gadgets or contraptions to fool with.* You learn to develop your strength through *"Dynamic Tension."* You simply utilize the DORMANT muscle-power in your own God-given body—watch it increase and multiply double-quick into real, solid LIVE MUSCLE.

My method—*"Dynamic Tension"*—will turn the trick for you. No *theory*—every exercise is *practical.* And, man, *so easy!* Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of *"Dynamic Tension"* almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to BUILD MUSCLE and VITALITY.

FREE BOOK "EVERLASTING HEALTH AND STRENGTH"

In it I talk to you in straight-from-the-shoulder language. Packed with inspirational pictures of myself and pupils—fellows who became NEW MEN in strength, my way. Let me show you what I helped THEM do. See what I can do for YOU! For a real thrill, send for this book today. AT ONCE.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 83R, 115 E. 23rd St., N. Y. C.

CHARLES ATLAS
Dept. 83R, 115 East 23rd Street
New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of **"Dynamic Tension"** can help make me a New Man—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your FREE book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." No obligation.

Name .....
(Please print or write plainly)

Address .....

City ..... State .....

(Continued from page 6)

INSHALLAH!

Request:—For years my husband and I have used the word "Inshallah," picked up from stories in *Adventure*. We assume now that it is an Arabian expression, and from its use have believed the meaning to be, "In the hands of Allah" roughly, "We have done our best, now fate will continue." We have a place in the Santa Cruz Mountains and would like to name it. We would greatly appreciate knowing the literal meaning of "Inshallah," the proper spelling and the pronunciation.

—Mrs. George R. Bent,
Boulder Creek, Cal.

Reply by Captain Beverly Giddings:—"Inshallah" is used in the sense of "God willing." For instance, an Arab might say, "Tomorrow I shall journey to Mascat, Inshallah."

It is also used in the sense of "Amen." For instance, one might say, "I hope he recovers"—and your reply might be "Inshallah." It is pronounced as it is spelled.

MORE dough to add to last month's batch.

Request:—Four of us fellows are going to the Lake of the Woods, Canada, on a vacation trip next summer. We will be back in the bush pretty far and we would like to have the best recipe for sourdough Bannock, and hot cakes, as the bread problem will have to be solved in camp far from bakeries.

—W. R. Denton,
Kennedy, Alabama.

Reply by Paul M. Fink:—Sourdough, a widely used leavening agent of the North country, is easily made. A couple of cups of flour, two spoons of sugar and a pinch of salt are mixed to a thin batter and set aside to sour, in a warm place. Two or three days will be about the right time to get it in good working order. Don't let the odor bother you. It has to smell that way before it will do the work.

For cakes, mix the "sourings" with enough flour and water for the quantity desired into a thick batter, with salt and a half-spoonful of soda and a touch of sugar. Let stand over night. When making your cakes, save out enough batter to leaven the next batch.

For bannock, or any baked loaf, mix the "sourings" with flour, salt, soda and sugar, to a stiff dough. Work it into loaves of the size you wish, then set aside in a warm place to rise. Bake on the frying pan, reflector, Dutch or other oven.

SEA-GOING grease-monkeys.

Request:—I have heard that one of the requirements to learn the trade of an airplane mechanic in the Navy is that you have to have a high school education. I would be very grateful if you would tell me whether this means that you have to obtain a high school diploma or, in my case, to complete four years of high school and, due to the fact that I haven't taken the required subjects, thereby obtaining a certificate instead of a diploma to show that I have completed four years of high school.

If a diploma is necessary to take the course of an airplane mechanic, then will you please send me a list of the trades taught in the Navy without a diploma as a requirement?

Another thing I would like to know is this: when one states which trade he wants to learn, are there any future experience-requirements necessary?

I will be very grateful if you will answer these questions as soon as possible as I am anxious to join the Navy.

—Warren Hill,
419 Greenwood Ave.,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Reply by Durand Kiefer:—You must have a certificate showing previous aviation-mechanic training in order to enlist directly in class V-2 of the Naval Reserve, which is the class that takes men for immediate assignment to aviation mechanical duties.

However, you need neither previous training of any sort nor do you need a high school diploma to enlist in the Regular Navy which, after two months of general recruit training, will give you an opportunity to be assigned to one of the regular Navy schools for aviation mechanical training. In other words, if you enlist in the regular Navy the class A, Group IV schools are available to you, training for aviation metalsmith, aviation machinist mate, aviation ordnanceman, and aviation radioman. If you can get a grade of 70 per cent or better in the General Classification Test and Me-

(Continued on page 116)

THE VOW OF SILENCE HAS BEEN BROKEN!

"The 7 Keys to Power alleges to teach," the author says, "All the Mysteries of Life from the Cradle to the Grave—and Beyond. It tells you the particular day and hour to do anything you desire, whether it be in the light of the moon, sun, or in total darkness."

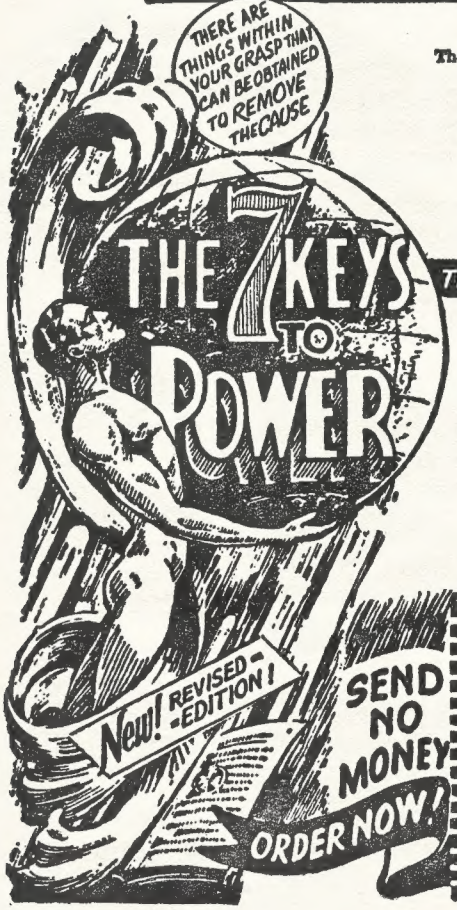
He claims, "The power to get what you want revealed at last, for the first time since the dawn of creation. The very same power which the ancient Chaldeans, Cuthic, Priests, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Sumerians used is at our disposal today."

He says, "Follow the simple directions, and you can do anything you desire. No one can tell how these Master Forces are used without knowing about this book, but with it you can mold anyone to your will."

From this book, He says, "You can learn the arts of an old Science as practiced by the Ancient Priestly Orders. Their marvels were almost beyond belief. You, too, can learn to do them all with the instructions written in this Book." Lewis de Claremont claims. "It would be a shame if these things could all be yours and you failed to grasp them."

He claims, "It is every man's birthright to have these things of life: MONEY! GOOD HEALTH! HAPPINESS! If you lack any of these, then this book has an important message for you. No matter what you need, there exists a spiritual power which is abundantly able to bring you whatever things you need."

OVERCOME ALL ENEMIES, OBSTACLES & HIDDEN FEARS


THERE ARE THINGS WITHIN YOUR GRASP THAT CAN BE OBTAINED TO REMOVE THE CAUSE
THE 7 KEYS TO POWER
New! REVISED EDITION!
SEND NO MONEY
ORDER NOW!

ARE YOU CROSSED IN ANY WAY?

The Seven Keys to Power, Lewis de Claremont says, shows you how to remove and cast it back.

The Book Purports to Tell You How to—

- Gain the love of the opposite sex.
- Unite people for marriages.
- Obtain property.
- Make people do your bidding.
- Make any person love you.
- Make people bring back stolen goods.
- Make anyone lucky in any games.
- Cure any kind of sickness without medicine.
- Get any job you want.
- Cast a spell on anyone, no matter where they are.
- Get people out of law suits, courts, or prison.
- Banish all misery.
- Gain the mastery of all things.
- Regain your youth and vigor.
- Choose words according to ancient, holy methods.

THE ONLY TRUE BOOK OF SUPREME MASTERSHIP!

This is the Power, He says, from which the old masters gained their knowledge and from which they sold limitless portions to certain favored Kings, Priests, and others at high prices, but never to be revealed under a vow, the violation of which entailed severe punishment.

THE VOW HAS NOW BEEN BROKEN

This book, he claims, shows you the secrets of old which when properly applied makes you able to control the will of all without their knowing it. If you have a problem and you wish to solve it, he says, don't hesitate. Advertisements cannot describe nor do this wonderful book justice. You must read it and digest its meaning, to really appreciate its worth.

GUARANTEED TO SATISFY OR YOUR MONEY REFUNDED

Only a limited number available for sale, so don't wait. It is worth many times its price. If you are wise, you will rush your order for this book NOW.

$1.

MR. LUCK'S CURIO CO., Dept. 187
800 N. Clark St., Dept. N,
Chicago, Illinois.

This coupon is worth $1.00 to you. Attach a Money Order for $1 to this coupon and we will send you your copy of The Seven Keys to Power—Regularly $2 for only $1.

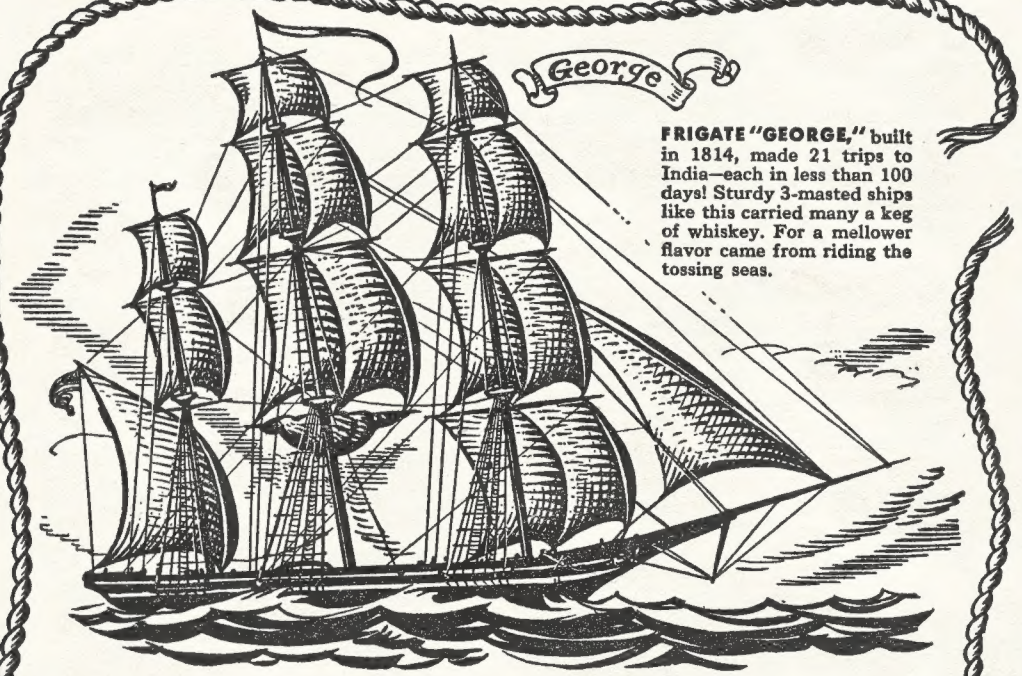
Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

SEND NO MONEY!

If you wish we Trust You. . . . Pay Postman $1 on delivery plus a few pennies Postage. Check here ( ).



FRIGATE "GEORGE," built in 1814, made 21 trips to India—each in less than 100 days! Sturdy 3-masted ships like this carried many a keg of whiskey. For a mellower flavor came from riding the tossing seas.

Enjoy Rocking Chair...its smoothness recalls famous wave-rocked whiskeys of old!

AFTER RETIRING, old salts found that a rocker — with a keg lashed beneath it—served as well! The smooth flavor of Rocking Chair was suggested by "keg-rocked" whiskeys!

MR. BOSTON RECAPTURES in Rocking Chair the smooth richness of rocked whiskeys by *controlled agitation in a special blending process.* Try Rocking Chair for rare enjoyment.

MR. BOSTON ROCKING CHAIR BLENDED WHISKEY

85 Proof • 75% Grain Neutral Spirits • Ben-Burk, Inc., Boston, Mass.

THE FOG OF MARCH FIFTEENTH

By
DURAND KIEFER

The conning tower dissolved in an ugly burst of explosive.

SOME seamen hold that fog is the uneasy soul of the devil himself, loose upon the sea, but that is not true. It is merely a great gray ghost's soul, restless, disembodied, and aloof. And although it generally magnifies the perils of the seaman, it is no more malignant than sublime; neither good nor bad. It is just fog, and it happens, and good seamen make the best of it, as they do of all the other vagaries of the sea with which they are momentarily fated to live. And occasionally, if the great gray ghost holds only terror and sudden death for some, it is the savior of others, especially in war time.

At least, such was the case with His Majesty's Ship *Tremaine*.

The *Tremaine* was the ex-American

destroyer *Briggs;* one of the old four stack flush-deckers, fitted out with additional anti-aircraft armament and assigned to the Channel Defense Force, with headquarters at Portsmouth. I joined her as U. S. Naval Observer last spring on what proved to be her first, and last, cruise under the White Ensign.

For three days and three nights we had been patrolling off the Normandy peninsula, playing cat to the German submarine rats holed up at their base in Cherbourg. It was mid-March, and the Channel being raw and sloppy, all hands were more or less miserable from the little vessel's lively motion, and uniformly half-frozen from the biting spray and wind.

During daylight we were in constant jeopardy from the marauding formations of Heinkels which not only sought us out directly to drive us off, but also used us as a convenient target on which to unload their eggs when returning from an unsuccessful raid over England. Then the sleek old ship would turn and circle and dodge at full speed through the choppy seas, all the while howling and hissing and spitting streams of bullets from her pom-pom and machine-guns like a wildcat set upon by a flight of hawks.

And although the bombs frequently raised furious white fountains all around her, the *Tremaine* after three days still showed no worse wounds than a slightly moth-eaten appearance of the canvas around her after gun-platform and two ragged splinter scars which she wore nobly, like chevrons, on the sternmost of her four stacks. Nor was this good fortune simply a matter of luck.

LIEUTENANT-Commander Peter Thompson, R.N., D.S.O., commanding H.M.S. *Tremaine,* was an old hand at this bomb dodging business, and one of the best in the game, although he hadn't yet seen thirty, and on this job probably never would. A Canadian, he had, under the compulsion of his youth and English blood, quickly transferred from the regular Canadian Navy at the declaration of war, and received his first annealing on a destroyer at Dunkirk, which made many a youngster a veteran.

He had had plenty of opportunity to add polish since. Beneath his startling sienna thatch, his somewhat patrician features, and his cold blue eyes, the polish had left him as hard as the bright breech of his foc'sle gun. For Thompson's particular talent, as the brass hats had early discovered, was this cat-at-the-rathole game off the Jerries' sub bases, and although he'd had two ships blown out from under him at it, he'd nailed nine of the vermin in as many months. So the brass hats gave him their blessing, the D.S.O., and the *Tremaine,* and told him to have at it again, with the young U. S. naval lieutenant along to see how it was done.

And then the fog set in.

It set in thick and cold early the night of March fourteenth and kept on getting thicker and colder until by midnight you would have thought you could make snowballs of it. Completely blacked out, the *Tremaine* prowled slowly back and forth on her station, no more than a dark and silent shadow in the otherwise shadowless depths of a lost world. The wind and sea had fallen with the onset of the fog, so that the only sounds reaching us on the bridge were the low hum of the fireroom blowers, the occasional click of the gyro-compass repeaters, and the hushed sigh of the bow through the soft swell.

For some time my mind habitually anticipated the harsh blast of the ship's fog-signal before the persistent silence brought home that this was the real thing—this was war, and not the pageant of it that had been my sole previous experience. In the six crowded hours that followed I was to be grateful that this realization had come so early and so cheaply.

The *Tremaine's* restrained pace through the fog was not regulated by any danger of collision, for the captain could be reasonably sure from his frequent soundings that he was in his assigned patrol sector, from which all friendly vessels would keep clear. And collision with an enemy was something to be much desired. But it was necessary to keep the ship's inherent noise-

level as low as possible to avoid interference with her under-water listening device, upon which she now had to depend entirely to track her prey, as sight contact was out of the question. And the less propeller noise we made the less chance there was of submarines spotting us with their listening gear.

That our listener was alert at his post deep in the hull was apparent from the number of times between one and two o'clock that Thompson answered the listening-room voice tube and jotted down a set of figures in the faint blue glow of his flashlight, repeating them back quietly, "Two or three. Bearing one zero eight relative. Four thousand yards."

The ship was in what the crew called Battle Condition Watch-and-Watch, with half of the officers and crew alert at their battle stations while the other half slept. This left the listening device and the depth charge battery fully manned continuously, and half the guns and torpedo battery. The captain, the executive officer, who was also the navigator, the chief engineer and myself, however, were impervious to this system. Brumby, the Exec, and MacMorran, the Chief, stayed on watch more or less continuously, in a sort of endurance marathon, out of loyalty to Thompson, while I was determined to demonstrate that the U. S. Navy could go as long without sleep as the British. Thompson, however, for all his lean and loose build, must have established some sort of a world's record for going without sleep in those four days, with the rest of us tied for a poor second.

Shortly after two A. M., when Thompson had received the fourth separate report of submarine activity from his listener within an hour, he snapped off his dim blue flash and stood rigid for some time staring into the black face of the night as if determined by sheer force of will to pierce the dank pall that shrouded the hostile coast. He must have been unaware of my presence at the next window, for I was surprised to hear him muttering imprecations on the fog under his breath with a vocabulary that did credit to his profession.

I grinned, glad for this accidental discovery that the man was not the bloodless automaton he was reputed to be. Knowing that we were operating in capricious tidal currents along the very edge of the German mine fields, I assumed that the hazards of stalking submarines with zero visibility under such conditions had at last worn through his celebrated nerve.

"What's the matter, Captain?" I asked lightly. "No hunting tonight?"

THOMPSON'S rather ascetic head turned with a snap, and in the faint light of the compass binnacle I could see a look of actual embarrassment. "Bitter little!" he said shortly, and with a word to the officer of the deck to keep a sharp lookout, he motioned me into the chart-house.

In the stygian darkness and utter silence of the little closed cubicle his voice sounded strangely hollow. "I suppose you've heard of the expected German invasion attempt this spring?" He snapped on the light to transfer the figures on his pad to the chart.

The chilling effect of his words must have shown in my face. All I could do was nod dumbly.

"Well, this is March fifteenth," he said evenly, bending over the chart-desk. "The Ides of March—and Hitler has a weakness for historical dates." He drew a bearing line across the chart and marked a cross on it. "This is also the first heavy spring fog we've had; it should last a couple of days." He laid out another cross. "The Jerries can make their own fog on occasion, but this one's made to order." He straightened and indicated the chart with the back of his hand. "Look at that!"

I looked. Our patrol area on the chart was dotted with numbered crosses, each one a submarine. They were mostly in pairs or threes and their tracks as plotted from the listener's reports took them all in the direction of Dover Strait. The implication was too plain. Before crossing the Channel the Germans would try to clear it of defending craft without tipping their hand to much, and their logical weapon for that was massed submarine action, at first. Then, with

the dawn, the minesweepers, the *Luftwaffe*, the mosquito boats, the troops. All this I blurted to Thompson, adding that even with the fog I didn't see how we had survived this long.

Thompson snapped out the light. "Y-e-es, the dawn, the sweeps, the *Luftwaffe*, the torpedo boats and the troops—almost poetic, isn't it? But they can't find us in this pea-soup except by accident, if we keep quiet. That's why I haven't been fooling with the wireless. We'll do more good just now sitting tight and keeping our ears open. But it's tough, sitting tight." You could tell it was for this man, hearing his voice.

"Using our radio now would tip off our position, I suppose," I said, thinking it was still the thing to do.

"Oh, the Jerries know we're out here, of course," Thompson said flatly, "but not just where."

Even so, it wasn't a comforting thought—like stopping your car on the tracks at a blind crossing to see if the express is coming when you've already heard the whistle. If a Blitzkrieg burst through the fog at dawn the *Tremaine* would catch the full force of it, lying as we were directly across its path. That is, if we were still afloat at dawn.

Thompson opened the chart-house door and bumped into the Exec hurrying toward it.

"What's up, Brumby?"

"Another submarine report. Three this time. Crossing not far ahead, about 2000 yards." He moved to step into the chart-house to plot the new data, but the captain caught his arm.

"Wait, Brumby. That makes some twelve of the blighters. That's enough. We'll have to open up and let Portsmouth have the picture now, and take our chances on revealing our position. Shoot this contact report down to wireless and then get onto the listening room by phone and plot me a depth charge run. We'll just let these Jerries know we're not asleep."

"Aye, aye, sir!" The Exec closed the door of the chart-house behind him. I'm afraid I didn't appreciate Thompson's famous guts just then.

In a moment Brumby's voice came quietly through the tube from the chart-house. "Course, zero one zero, Captain. Speed twenty. Three minutes, forty seconds to go."

Thompson rang up twenty knots on the engine-room telegraph and took his post at the helmsman's shoulder, bringing the ship around to the attack course. The blower hum rose to a whine, the screw vibration woke the ship with its shuddering rumble, not unlike a train crossing a trestle. The wind began to whistle through the bridge, churning wisps of fog in fluid eddies over the lip of the windbreak, and banking it around the foc'sle gun like a snowdrift. The gun-crew huddled behind their shield, ghostly figures on the very edge of our minute and private world. We charged blindly into the still void beyond our bow.

CHAPTER II

THE SUBS

THE only human overtone to the ship's insistent voices was the hollow report of the listener rolling up the voice tube, continuously punctuated by the sharper tones from the chart-house, "Two minutes to go. One minute, thirty seconds to go. Left five degrees."

The listening-room suddenly announced "Silent!" and ceased its chatter. The submarines, hearing us bearing down on them, had abruptly stopped their engines and sunk to the ocean's floor to interrupt our sound plot of them.

"Right ten degrees! Forty seconds to go!" Brumby adjusted his track.

"Stand by!" Thompson swung the ship deftly ten degrees to the right and raised his arm, eyeing the depth charge release operator over his shoulder.

"Fire one!" The arm fell, a charge rolled off the stern, its fall hardly discernible in the turbulent wash of the wake.

"Fire two!" The Y-gun coughed aft, the hurtling pair of charges only dull blurs in the fog, followed by a distinct splash fifty feet off each side of the wake, unseen.

"Fire three!"

Number one charge let go with a dull

boom, rattling the bridge windows as we heeled violently into a sharp turn to circle back. We'd planted four charges in a large diamond, roughly a hundred feet apart, one astern, then two out on each side, and one astern again as we raced forward. We were well into our circle when the pair from the Y-gun cut loose about 100 feet down. The ship shuddered sharply again and a geyser bloomed briefly in the mist off the port bow as the fourth charge exploded. We had straightened out abruptly to pass through its foam as a marker for another barrage when the listener suddenly came to life again.

"Propeller bearing six three, five hundred yards!" the tube squawked.

Thompson had already ordered the wheel hard right to head for it, when the cry, *"Torpedo!"* shrilled from the foc'sle, and again, *"Torped-o-o-o!"*

One of the forward gun-crew pointed rigidly to starboard, his arm pivoting rapidly forward as the ship swung into her turn. Thompson saw the wake. "Reverse the rudder!" he snapped.

The ship rolled wildly, at twenty knots, and lurched to check her swing. The gunner down forward waved his arm aft to indicate the torpedo wake was heading clear, along our side. I drew a big breath and leaned against the bridge rail.

Then I saw this other one, just streaking past our bow in the wake of the first one. It was about twenty feet off, but our stern, with the rudder hard over, was swinging that way now. I simply punched Thompson and pointed. He made one leap, wrenched the wheel from the surprised helmsman's hands and spun it hard. For a moment the ship planed dizzily, like a performer on a slack-wire, while we all clung.

Then there was a deafening roar and the whole fuzzy fog world turned a brief horrid red. I felt the ship stagger drunkenly and slow down with a jerk. I didn't realize I was lying under the bridge chart-board with the whole thing in my lap until the Exec stumbled over me. I got up gingerly, apologizing in my confusion. Only subconsciously I knew we'd been torpedoed. My consciousness refused to admit it.

THOMPSON, still at the wheel, broke the stunned silence on the bridge. "Hop back aft, Brumby, and have a look," he said calmly.

The Exec plunged down the bridge ladder and the violent pink tinge of the fog faded enough to make out the other figures stirring around the bridge. Thompson was at the voice tube to the gun-control platform. "Warn all guns to keep a sharp lookout for submarines," he barked, "and make it hot for any that come poking—"

He was interrupted by an ear-splitting scream of steam as the safety valves on the boilers erupted into the night. Above the racket I could hear him trying to get a report from the engine-room on the damage below. At the same time the radio-room call-bell rang at my elbow and I answered it for him.

"Bridge."

"Transmitter's out."

I relayed this to Thompson, shouting in his ear above the scream of steam. He just nodded and stood there on the slightly sloping deck with his head hanging as if in thought. I expected the deck to take a violent angle and slide us all off the bridge at any moment. Destroyers are not built to take torpedo hits. But the gentle slope toward the stern and a sluggish, erratic rolling in the slight sea was all that was noticeable.

The ship had already come to an almost complete stop.

When the escaping steam ceased after two or three minutes Thompson stepped impatiently to the radio-room voice tube.

"Did you get those contact reports off to Portsmouth before your transmitter went out?"

"Barely got started, Captain."

For the first time since I'd met him I saw Thompson go taut. "That's bad," he addressed me solemnly, as if nothing else was.

Brumby clattered up the bridge ladder on the run and went straight to Thompson, saluting.

"Well?" said the captain.

"Stern's all gone to the after deckhouse," announced the Exec. "After gun-

platform is warped some, but the gun will still train. Mainmast went by the board, though, taking the wireless antenna with it. The rudder's gone and both propellers. The after hold is flooded but the magazine bulkheads are holding, and the carpenter's gang is shoring them up now. Shaft alleys are both flooded as far as the engine-room, but that bulkhead's holding, too."

The Exec rattled on while the captain stood clutching the binnacle against the loggy roll and hanging his head attentively. "Somehow the depth charges didn't let go. The torpedo must have just caught one of the propellers and lifted the whole stern off in a piece, taking them with it. They're all gone, of course, like everything else back there." Brumby drew a breath.

"How many casualties?" asked Thompson between his teeth.

"Just nine, by the first count. Three killed and four wounded in the after gun-crew, and two men in the depth charge racks missing, of course. The wounded are down in the dressing station now."

"How's the auxiliary wireless transmitter in the after deck-house?" Thompson's voice was strained.

"All knocked to hell, Captain, and so is the torpedo workshop, the carpenter shop, and the washrooms. The main deck's awash where the ship ends in a bloody pile of junk and twisted scrap metal just aft of the deck-house. Astern of that is just ocean and fog now."

"But she'll stay afloat?"

"Yes, sir, she should. There's some leakage through the after bulkheads, of course, but the main drain seems to be intact and the pumps are working."

"And the boats?"

"Seem to be sound, sir."

THOMPSON raised his head slowly and stared aft along the narrow decks as far as the fog would permit. The only sound that disturbed his thoughtful silence was the musical hum of the ship's generator and the faint rhythmic screech and chunk of the pumps drifting up from the mists aft of the stacks.

My thoughts were with him, but they could get no further than a vicious circle. Without rudder or propellers we were no more than a derelict, drifting off the enemy's coast, with only our anchor to keep us from wandering in his mine fields or washing up at his feet. The listening gear, I knew, had been reported in order, but it could only tell us what we knew already—that the waters all around us were infested with submarines. Without radio we could neither warn England of their terrible significance nor even send a simple plea for help if and when the lightning struck. And without our contact reports there was little chance that the Force Commander had any notion of the gravity of the situation. In the meantime, our immediate survival depended almost entirely upon the blessed obscurity of the fog—a notoriously undependable thing.

I was still floundering in this morass when Thompson broke the weighted silence abruptly. "Well," he addressed Brumby, "we can't run, and we can't call for help. But we can still fight. We've still got all our guns and torpedoes and plenty of ammunition and every Jerry that asks for it will get his share. Pipe all hands to battle stations and distribute the engineers among the ammunition and repair parties."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"And Brumby—"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell the communication officer I would like to see him." The captain glanced briefly at the ship's clock, its hands luminous on its blacked-out face. It was ten minutes to three.

The general quarters siren howled mournfully in the fog and the ship sprang alive with men pounding to their action stations at the guns, the torpedo tubes, the bridge, and the gun-control platform above it. Sub-lieutenant Clayton, the communication officer, appeared at the captain's elbow and saluted.

Thompson returned the salute casually. "I presume you have been trying to get another transmitting antenna up?"

"Yes, sir. But our spares were in the after hold where we can't get at them, so we've had to use anything we could find."

"Yes, I didn't expect you'd be able to get on the correct frequency again, but you must—you simply must—get this warning through on some frequency, understand?" The captain shook a folded message form in his clenched fist. "Try to get on the distress frequency, and if you can't make that, try anything—anything! And give it all the power you've got in the hope some station will pick you up."

"The Jerries will most likely pick us up first and spot our position with their shore direction-finders," Clayton offered.

"We'll have to chance that," snapped the captain, and turned on his heel.

At that instant the foc'sle gun cut loose with a blinding blast that shook the bridge under us. Before the flash blindness had cleared from my eyes she let go again, leaving me breathless as well as blind. It was difficult in the surprise and shock of unexpected gun-fire to realize for a moment what was happening. After four or five shots, between which I could hear the thunder-clap of hits not far abeam, the gun ceased firing and Thompson and I both stared hard into the red murk where the gun was pointed.

Someone on the gun yelled, "There she is again!" but Thompson, who had had the sense to close his eyes at the first shot, barked, "Hold your fire!"

As the red glare cleared I could make out a dark blob, like a hole in the pink curtain of fog off our port beam. Thompson saw it too, better than I. A slow grin spread under his binoculars. "Nice work, number one!" he sang out, and to me, "He's finished, that chap."

Through my glass the dark blob had become a submarine's conning tower, slowly turning in the fog, its edges torn up and its mast and periscopes broken and awry. The hull was still awash, and seemed undecided whether to rise or sink. Other than a barely perceptible motion that brought it slowly nearer, the U-boat displayed no signs of life. If the submarine continued moving as she was, there was danger of her colliding with us as we drifted helplessly no more than a couple of hundred yards away.

"Number one," called Thompson. "Let her have a couple more in the hull."

THE four-inch gun couldn't miss now, with the point-blank range and the clearer target. Its blast reddened the night twice with slow deliberation. The conning tower staggered and dissolved in an ugly burst of explosive at its base. The second shell, hitting just at the water-line, buried the hull in a geyser of water and steam.

A hatch opened, almost awash, and a half-dozen figures poured out before the sea lapped over it. The grotesque conning tower lurched forward and down, and in a matter of minutes had slid swiftly out of sight, leaving only a great swirl of foam and a few bobbing heads to mark its grave.

The captain ordered the pulling-whaleboat away and then stepped over to the lookout on the port bridge wing. "Did you see that submarine?"

The young seaman's voice was tremulous with wonder. "Yes, sir! I saw it break water not five hundred yards off, sir, right in the middle of my sector, there, sir, heading forward like, across our bow. But I couldn't no more than open my mouth than the foc'sle gun potted her, sir. Beautiful hit, too, right forward. Then I couldn't see no more, sir; everything all red," the boy finished lamely.

"Very well," Thompson said with a smile in his voice. "You can see all right again now?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

The whaleboat creaked off in the fog and returned shortly with seven wet and sullen Germans in life jackets. Thompson, watching them come alongside from the bridge, spotted an officer among them immediately, although I couldn't have distinguished at that distance in the dark. He ordered the officer taken to his cabin, and turned over the bridge for a moment to Brumby in order to question the prisoner privately. "Secure the whaleboat astern," he ordered. "We may be needing it soon."

I believe the remark was intended to be jovial, but its implications were too dark for me to appreciate it.

In less than twenty minutes the captain was back on the bridge. "Oberleutnant Gerhardt won't tip his hand,"

he told me when he'd taken over the bridge again, "although he speaks English of a sort."

"Is he the one that blew off our stern?" I asked.

"Oh, no, that one didn't even hang around for a look after he heard the explosion, he was so sure we were done in, I suppose. No, this Gerhardt was just a student captain, out for instruction on one of the boats we depth-charged a while ago. It seems we shook her up so badly she sprung several seams and was leaking so much that the captain decided to return to the base. But he was a little unsure of his position and picked a bad time to come up for a look around. We must have been just out of sight of his periscope in the fog when he ordered her up." Thompson snorted.

"And he won't say what they were out for?"

"No, of course not. But I put on a little act of being scared to death we were in for an invasion tonight, and his smug manner pretty much gave him away."

Thompson cast a quick look at the quartermaster hovering nearby and fell abruptly silent.

The horrid premonition of impending Armageddon returned to the pit of my stomach with an almost physical impact. It was not relieved by the faint but unmistakable sound of a number of Diesel engines laboring somewhere well off our port beam in the fog.

Thompson and I listened attentively for some time until the sounds grew fainter still and finally receded into the dismal silence of our ghostly little world again. At the question in my eyes Thompson grunted, "Minesweepers standing out," and again glanced at the clock as if to verify their place in the timetable of invasion. "That leaves only the *Luftwaffe*, the torpedo boats, and the troops, doesn't it?" he said dully. It was now almost four o'clock and the first faint lightening of the fog's dirty gray could be expected in about half an hour. How long our cloak of invisibility would last after that was nothing but pure conjecture.

"Mind if I see what I can get out of our friend Fritz?" I offered, to shake off my gloom. There was little chance of verifying our deductions from that source, but I'd heard the communication officer report that he was transmitting on a frequency close to the distress band, now, and I realized how vital it was to be able to support a warning to England with something more than circumstantial evidence if the radio should raise someone there.

Thompson grunted, "Go ahead and good luck to you."

I went down to his cabin, informed the sentry on the door of the captain's permission, and pushed into the little cramped room.

CHAPTER III

THE LUFTWAFFE

OBER-LEUTNANT GERHARDT was pacing the narrow floor smoking one of Thompson's pipes. He was little more than a youngster, although a bright-enough looking one. He recognized the difference of my uniform insignia from the British immediately and his concern was most flattering.

"*Mein Gott!*" he exclaimed. "American ships it iss, und now American officers!" He sat down rather heavily on the captain's bunk. "It hass happened, den. Dot America iss in da var. Dey don't tell us not'ing any more!"

I simply smiled wisely, watching his face. "We just heard your minesweepers going out," I said.

He stiffened and his pale eyes grew hard. "So?" His eyebrows arched, and the pipe hung poised before his thin lips. But he was not at home in the language. His expression as well as his tone said plainly, "Yes, I heard them too."

I then took to passing innocuous remarks of a general nature dealing with his personal feelings about the war, to which his natural sympathies would lead him to reply affirmatively, until I had him nodding regularly, if grudgingly, in reply, enjoying the comfort of being agreeable without being informative, or even having to hazard speech at all.

After dwelling at some length on his training and career, as if trying to learn

something of them, I remarked casually, "It must be very irritating to train so hard to become a good officer only to be forced out of action through no fault of your own."

Without looking up, Gerhardt nodded moodily, and I went on, almost in the same breath, "Especially tonight when you could be taking part in the greatest military venture in history."

His nod became emphatic, which I thought revealing, but not nearly so much so as the look of startled concern which clouded his face when he looked up suddenly, struck by the full meaning of my remark. I instantly abandoned my friendly attitude and smiled my satisfaction with his reaction. The involuntary flush of rage and embarrassment that reddened his youthful features seemed like final confirmation of the information I sought. I said, "Thank you, Herr Gerhardt," with an acid smile and turned to take my findings to the captain.

I was stopped by the angry snarl of planes diving on the ship, punctuated by the shuddering concussion of explosions close aboard. The German's confusion left him abruptly and his eyes lighted up. A childish grin parted his lips as he raised one finger stiffly skyward. *"Der Luftwaffe!"* he crowed. I bolted from the room for the bridge.

When I burst on deck from the blind confines of the wardroom I half expected to find the fog cleared and the dawn bright, with the helpless ship fully exposed to the fury of the planes that continued to scream down upon her. Instead the thick mists drifted as heavily as ever across the decks, and frequent bomb geysers, roaring not more than a hundred yards off either side, were almost invisible against the thick gray curtain. It was hard to understand what the planes were using for a target until I heard shouting aloft and glanced up to our tall foretopmast. There, just visible in the paling fog swirling around its base, two members of the crew sat on the signal yards and struggled frantically with the topmast fittings.

"Get it down! Get it down!" I heard Thompson's voice from the bridge, and then, as a third figure clambered up the ladder with an axe, "Use the axe. Bear a hand!"

THE planes kept snarling down on their mark, maddeningly invisible above the mists, while the bombs flowered red and white in the water all around us. The chatter of machine-guns, both from the planes and the ship, was deafening. Bullets splashed like hail in the water on all sides, and I marveled that in such a storm no one seemed to be getting hurt. It finally struck me that I was in danger of being hit myself, and I leaped up the ladder to the quite useless cover of the thin bridge roof.

It puzzled me that the ship's boats were being lowered in such great haste, unless we had been worse hit than I was aware, until I saw the motor-launch, as soon as it hit the water, plow busily forward and take a hawser from the ship's bow. The motor-whaleboat had already followed and taken a second heavy line from the bow, when the topmast, upon which the men aloft had been chopping furiously, started to topple with a great splintering of wood and straining of wire.

To the smothered cry of *"Look out below!"* the tall stick crashed heavily over the side, taking the port signal-flag rack with it, and a large section of the port well-deck rail. In the midst of all the stunning confusion of roaring motors, bursting explosive, hacking machine-guns and tearing metal, I half-expected to hear someone yell *"Timber-r-r!"* when the spar fell, and felt an instant's real disappointment when no one did. It was the sort of ridiculous incongruity that the idle mind will occasionally grasp in moments of unbearable tension.

With the topmast down, and the ship's height reduced by some twenty feet, Thompson gave the order to cease firing to the pom-pom and machine-guns, and attempted to take refuge in the rolling sea of fog rather than fight it out on such unequal terms. The two motor-boats strained with all their eighty horsepower on the ship's thin high bow, inching it laboriously ahead, while the bombs and machine-gun bursts continued for some time to splash all around the ship without doing any great damage.

That Thompson's strategy was sound was soon established by the diminishing bomb explosions, at greater and greater distances as the planes lost us in the fog, until their attacks ceased altogether for lack of a target, and only their motors could be heard, sweeping and zooming above the mists in frustrated search. After a while, when breaking daylight had bleached the dark fog blanket to a uniform pearl gray and it still drifted, at its lowest, twenty and thirty feet above our broken mast, the planes gave up and left us to the silence of the empty sea.

When the solitude of our unnatural little world had again closed down about us, like a box, I marveled aloud to Thompson that the planes had found us so early, with nothing but the faint light of dawn to see no more than a few feet of our topmast sticking above the fog.

Thompson shook his head in contradiction. "You forget the wireless, old chap," he said. "We've had it going full blast trying to get a warning through, you know. The Jerries didn't have to be very smart to pick up a broadcast like that and put their shore direction finder stations on it. The flying boys had our position nicely fixed before they took off, I'll wager. All they needed was a target to pot at when they got here —and of course I never thought for a minute that the bloody mast would be sticking through the fog."

I suddenly remembered my triumph over our prisoner below, and hurriedly gave Thompson the fruits of it.

"Yes," he nodded, "that bears out our suspicions rather neatly, I'm afraid. It's dawn already, with only the torpedo boats and the troops to come. And we're off the air again. Our jury antenna was rigged to that topmast we cut down."

"Did you raise anyone before it went?"

"No!" Thompson snapped bitterly.

My eye went to the boats still hauling us slowly through the mists, and I indicated them with a thumb. "They could haul us out of this, right across the Channel, if the fog and our luck holds," I suggested.

Thompson eyed me sharply. "Would you do that? Would you crawl out now, and leave the door wide open without anyone to watch it?"

"No," I said hastily, "I guess not. But what good are you here without any communications?"

Thompson shrugged and stared moodily through the fog at the boats. Suddenly he swung and gripped my arm. "Thanks," he grunted, and swept up his megaphone.

"For what?"

"For your suggestion about the boats. I'm going to send one over to Weymouth with a warning. Rather hopeless, of course. It's better than sixty miles across the Channel here, so the boat won't get there till around noon. But it's the only thing to do now. Do you want to go along?"

I'll admit my heart leaped at the prospect of getting off that derelict, but when I'd thought a minute I shook my head. I thought about the uniform I was wearing and the reputation behind it. It was bigger than anything inside me. "No thanks," I said, "I'll stay here."

"Good," smiled Thompson, and I could see he was actually relieved. "But things here are likely to get a whole lot worse before they get any better, if they ever do." He called the motor-whaleboat alongside with his megaphone, and in a few minutes had the communication officer in it with a message for England. Nothing but the captain's heated assurance that the message was more important than the ship or anyone on it would silence young Clayton's protests at being sent ashore.

CHAPTER IV

THE TORPEDO BOATS

THE boat got away with extra gas drums and all the engineering ratings it would carry since, as Thompson remarked, "They aren't needed here any more, and they'd most likely be looking for a boat ride soon if they stayed, anyway." With this cheerful thought in mind, I watched with mixed emotions while the boat rounded the bow and faded into the dawn fog on a compass course across the Channel. It seemed

odd, in the tranquillity of the moment, that we might never see Clayton and his men again, or ever know whether they got to England on time. Or at all, for that matter. And yet the whole world would soon know, and even children of unborn generations, pouring over their history books in some unimaginable future.

I was still listening to the amiable sputter of the motor-whaleboat exhaust echoing to the north when a new and startling sound attracted my attention to the south, toward the French coast. At first it was only a low angry buzzing, like the swarming of bees on a hot summer day, but it soon swelled to the ominous roar of a hurricane sweeping upon a mountain top. The look I shot Thompson was more a confirmation than a question.

"Right!" he nodded. "Motor torpedo boats." And then, without taking the pipe from his mouth, "Be a miracle if the whaleboat isn't caught." In his anxiety to get a warning to England he seemed to have no regard for what was likely to happen to us. That he actually didn't, he made perfectly clear with his next remark, made to me as casually as a suggestion about the weather. "Just possible we could break up that little motor-boat sortie before it stumbles on the whaleboat," he said, and without further explanation, called the gunnery lieutenant down to the bridge.

"Assign each gun to cover a separate sector of our horizon, so that all sectors are covered. Set sight-bar range for the limit of visibility, 1000 yards. Each gun is to go into local control immediately and open fire on any target which appears in its sector, without further orders." Thompson stopped and listened intently for some minutes to the rising drone of motors while Mott, the gunnery lieutenant, waited at his elbow. The sound seemed to be spread over a wide arc that stretched from our port beam to well aft of our quarter. Already you could hear individual motors along the arc, about six or eight of them apparently spread out in a scouting line.

Thompson turned to Mott again and spoke quickly. "If they go past us without sighting us, fire two or three rounds

With Thin Gillettes you have no trouble
In easing off the toughest stubble!
These thrifty blades come four for ten . . .
And sure rate high with well-groomed men!
Protect your skin from irritation caused by misfit blades
THIN
Gillette
BLADES
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
4 for 10c
8 for 19c
Save Extra Money! Get The Big New Economy Package, 12 For 27c

from the after gun immediately to attract their attention and bring them back before they stumble into our whaleboat. I expect they're looking for us anyway, coached by the planes overhead." For the first time, I noticed that there was the sound of motors over us, too.

Mott saluted and made for the ladder to the gun-control platform, but Thompson stopped him again, briefly. "And have the torpedo tubes cast loose and all twelve torpedoes ready to fire instantly, in case the motor-boats are supported by something larger. If they are, each tube-nest that will bear is to fire a direct three-torpedo spread on sight, without further orders. With the visibility range not more than a thousand yards they won't have to fool much with target angle and speed. Set forward tubes for curved fire and after tubes for straight fire; depth-setting, ten feet all around."

"Aye aye, sir!" Mott was already halfway up the ladder to the gun-control platform. We could hear him giving the orders to the guns and torpedo tubes over the battle telephones above us while the noise of the approaching motors grew constantly louder. It was possible to detect, now, that the mosquito boats were checked down to something less than their full speed, and were apparently spaced out about one thousand yards apart, although it was soon evident that they were headed obliquely toward our stern and not directly toward us. As the wave of motors swept nearer still they again merged more and more into one sound, indicating that they were coming in line with our stern.

WITH our nerves hiked to the last notch we strained our eyes into the murk to catch the first glimpse of a dark hull bursting out of the fog. The racket of the nearest motor, amplified by the fog, convinced us that the flank boat would be upon us at any instant, and it wasn't until it had passed astern well to the other side of the ship that we realized with a start, and on my part, some honest relief, that the scouting line had missed us by yards in the bleak mists.

Thompson had already opened his mouth to call Mott when the gunnery lieutenant barked "Gun Four, open fire!" into the telephone strapped around his neck. The after gun instantly slammed out a round into the fog, filling it with thunderous echoes. It was just light enough now so that we were no longer blinded by the flash.

The immediate response to our shot was the sudden increase in pitch of the nearest motors as they were opened to full throttle, and the boat swept into a wide circle back. You could almost see her step out and turn toward us, just from the racket she made. The pom-pom, in whose sector the sound hovered, followed it unerringly, as if the compact sound center was an invisible magnet attracting the multiple stubby barrels of the ugly weapon. I'm sure that if the Nazi motor-boatmen had been aware of how real a target the thunder of their motors made in that blind fog where our guns so confidently stalked them at suicidal range they would have been less anxious to come charging at us.

The instant an ugly black nose, with its sweeping white mustache of spray, burst out of the mist close on our quarter the pom-pom tore loose in a mad stuttering roar, as if its fury had been impatiently restrained too long. The first shots were a little short, kicking up a welter of spray under the boat's bow.

She was headed almost parallel to our length when she appeared, but she quickly swerved toward us to bring her gaping torpedo tubes to bear. But No. 3 four-inch gun, amidships, liberally interpreting its sector limits, let go with a shot that threw a solid white spout close under the swerving bow, kicking it around toward us so violently that the boat plunged over on its side, plowing up spray with her half-submerged deck. At this instant the pom-pom got dead on, and chopped the deck and squat pilot-house into a mass of rubble.

The boat reeled back on her V-bottom, the engines still driving her madly forward, although it was clear that she was now out of control. No. 4 gun, aft, unable to keep out of it any longer, slammed out two shots in rapid succession, the second catching the circling

boat square on the stern and opening it up like a split melon. The roar of the motors ceased dramatically in a series of violent explosions as the gas tanks blew up and set off the torpedoes in their tubes.

The boat had simply disappeared in a burst of fireworks before our eyes. Its life, within the narrow range of our gun sights, had been less than two minutes.

Thompson looked at me with an exaggerated smugness that was amusing. I grinned spontaneously like a kid at a circus. It had been easier than any of us expected.

But Thompson's eyes were already dark again. "Capital shooting, all guns, Mr. Mott," he called up to the control platform above us, "but warn your gunners to stay in their own sectors hereafter. We'll be getting it from all sides at once now, I think."

The gunnery lieutenant acknowledged the order and we heard him pass it to his guns. From the sounds behind the fog curtain all around, Thompson had the Germans figured right, too. At first there was a general ominous quieting of the motor noises, but engines designed to drive fifty-foot boats fifty miles an hour can't be effectively muffled, especially in a calm fog, where the frustration of the sight sense for a long period seems to sharpen the hearing. Even when they were running dead slow we could hear the big motors coughing and sputtering nearer in the fog.

When a dark shape took form for an instant on the edge of our little world it was greeted by a hell of shell bursts, and roared off into the murk again with wide open throttles. "That one will be only scouting," Thompson told me. "Having fixed our position exactly, he's off to rendezvous with his fellows and plan the attack."

CHAPTER V

BLINDMAN'S BUFF

THE little short-range radiophone sets these boats carried made them perfectly effective as a group, especially in conjunction with similarly equipped aircraft, although we could be confident, from the way the fog had hung on and thickened since dawn, that we had nothing much to fear from the planes far above.

With their customary thoroughness the Germans took their time in encircling us, although we could only assume this, as they were careful to haul off far enough and run slow enough so that it was difficult to be sure just what they were up to. The very length of time we had to wait, as nerve-racking as it was, was fair assurance that we had figured the attack right, however. Thompson was openly pleased that his enemy was going to such trouble to come in from all quarters simultaneously, since this permitted us to bring all our guns to bear at once, each on its own target, with a minimum of confusion between guns. If there weren't more than five targets left, there would be a gun for each of them. If there were more—well, there were our machine-guns, six of them, and while they wouldn't stop a boat, they might make it tough to aim a torpedo. Standing there on the silent bridge, with the subdued throbbing of those invisible little boats sounding so irrelevant and tranquil in the distance, it all seemed for a moment like a childish game of hide-and-seek, or blindman's buff, that grown men were forced for some absurd reason to take seriously.

In the next moment, however, all illusions were rudely shattered by the sudden roar of motors from every point of the compass. The attack was beautifully mounted and timed, but the defense was no less prepared. It occurred to me in those first moments that this crippled destroyer, this floating bit of England with the soul of America in it, was in its limited sphere playing the part of the whole of England, standing off, alone and isolated, but with a grim and quiet courage, the hordes of unseen terror that assailed it from out of the mists and half-light.

The first boat to pierce the curtain appeared on the starboard bow and was immediately greeted by a roar from the foc'sle gun and a spout of water that kicked it violently broadside. In less than four seconds the second shot foun-

tained close alongside the racing hull and simply flicked it over, bottoms up, in a spectacular smother of spray, like a great fish floundering. For an instant the twin screws churned angrily in the air before the boat slipped from sight.

The port midships gun had already opened up and was joined immediately by the pom-pom spitting out to starboard. Within a minute every gun on the ship, including the machine-guns, was slamming and sputtering away independently in a maddening bedlam of explosions that kept the ship rattling and shaking continuously like an old Ford on a corduroy road. Against the fog curtain our narrow horizon was alive with dancing fountains that pretty well covered the boats dodging among them. A continuous splatter of machine-gun bullets beat upon the ship from the attackers' guns, swiveling in their glass turrets, although the jouncing boats made very poor aiming platforms. The pilots were having equal trouble bringing their torpedo tubes to bear in the face of the kicking about they were getting. Two or three white torpedo wakes seethed past us, almost unnoticed. A welter of flying paint chips and empty shell cases of all sizes showered upon the decks.

In the face of this concerted assault of both aerial and submarine death and destruction I expected to see Thompson busy about the bridge in a fine demonstration of fighting command, but so far I had neither seen him nor heard him issue a single order. I turned to find him standing stolidly beside me, with set lips and a curious light in his cold eyes, as if he were no more than a neutral observer himself. I was at first surprised and somewhat anxious until I realized suddenly that I was witnessing a command that functioned so smoothly that there was no need for further control in the moment of ultimate test, which is as it must be. Thompson must, and could, rely entirely upon his previous foresight and the training of his men. The loaders, the sight-setters, the pointers automatically worked the guns as silently and effortlessly as if they were simply mechanical attachments of the deadly machines. Amazingly few of them fell away in the first wild moments of the action.

I WAS in those moments so fascinated by the cool efficiency that issued from the white heat of the battle that it was difficult to follow all its various effects upon the enemy. I was thrilled, too, by the force of Thompson's genius operating uncannily through it all. I noticed, rather incidentally, that the pom-pom had dug through the hull and into the motors of one torpedo boat so that it burst into flames and swerved off into the fog, trailing a tail of fire like a crazy comet. Another boat, caught squarely on the bow by a four-inch shell, was one moment a leaping demon and the next, after a brief but horrible burst of flame, nothing but a patch of silent smoking flotsam on the ashen face of the sea.

Further aft it appeared for a moment as if one boat had broken through and was bent on ramming our already mangled stern with its torpedoes still aboard, until I realized that the boat was actually chasing its own tail in a tight and hopeless circle, while our No. 4 gun, with almost comical desperation, tried vainly to depress enough on its warped roller path to polish it off. Meanwhile, the two after machine-guns poured a continous streak of tracers into the wounded boat, which sputtered back only occasionally in the brief intervals that its guns would bear.

The machine-gun duel aft had barely ended in the silencing and sinking of the torpedo boat, and the remainder of our guns were still blazing away successively at a sole remaining boat that had adopted the desperate tactic of circling us, when the mists less than a thousand yards to the east erupted in a blaze of fire, the very thunder of which shook the *Tremaine* like an earthquake. A solid salvo of no less than six 4.4's roared into white water just beyond us as one of the new German destroyers loomed out of the fog, swinging swiftly parallel to us and rolling a thick black cloud from her stacks.

I glanced anxiously at Thompson to see what he would do to meet this new

threat, but he only stiffened and stood a little taller beside me. It is a minute but perfect tribute to the quality of his discipline that in the decisive few seconds between that first paralyzing broadside and the next, our entire starboard battery of six torpedoes were instantly launched as planned without a word being said. I doubt whether the men on the tubes, blinded by fog, gunflash, and powder smoke, ever saw the target they fired at so unhesitatingly, but they knew with the instinct of fighting men that the hell that had torn loose so suddenly and so close could only be a warship of some sort. With their tubes already laid for a wide spread against just such an event, they had their orders and they carried them out. Thank God they were awake. This was no time for consulting, or waiting.

I remember that the sleek lengths of our torpedoes were just taking the water when the second broadside flashed along the whole length of the black hull of the German, arresting the torpedo splashes in mid-air in my mind, like a swiftly moving film suddenly stopped on a screen. It was the last clear impression of that fight that I got. In the crushing deluge of sound, light, and collapsing air caused by the simultaneous impact of the enemy's shell and the blast of our own guns, our whole starboard side burst into a molten hell of flame. The little ship reeled sideways bodily and lurched to port, throwing most of us on the bridge off our feet.

I rose from my knees to see Thompson standing rigid against the chart-house where he had been blown, one sleeve and all the buttons gone from his coat, and one trouser leg split to the knee. His eyes were still fixed on the enemy, however, and there was no blood on him. Beyond him the starboard midships gun rocked forward drunkenly and dived wearily into the sea as the deck-house collapsed under it and slid most of the bodies of the crew after their gun.

I noticed that the upper half of No. 4 stack was gone, with the lower half opened out like a burst firecracker, while No. 3 stack leaned at a drunken angle against its two remaining guy wires. The tall spidery pom-pom platform farther aft folded slowly upon itself as I watched, the very much alive gun-crew dripping from it to the deck like over-ripe fruit from a falling tree. Where the motor-launch skids alongside this platform had been, a great ragged hole gaped in the deck, but the missing boat, I remembered, was still tethered quietly to the bow, unless it had already been sunk.

I CAUGHT a glimpse of our torpedo wakes fanning out perfectly toward their target, and turned to point them out to Thompson, only to find that he was missing from the chart-house bulkhead. Before I could look around for him the next German salvo let go and arrived almost simultaneously.

One 4.4 must have hit just below the bridge as I felt myself lifted up as by a magic carpet and deposited, painlessly and fully conscious, in an ugly heap of bridge fittings, instruments and broken glass on the other side of the bridge. Mostly to assure myself that I was neither dead nor wounded I scrambled to my feet again and clung dazedly to the first thing my hand touched. It turned out to be Thompson's shoulder, as he sat at my feet, his now trouserless legs spread in front of him. As I helped him up, he tried out his legs, and said quizzically, "Damned if they don't work. Are you all right?"

I said, "Yes, I guess so," and we both looked around quickly before another salvo hit us.

The starboard side of the bridge being carried away completely, we had an excellent view of the German destroyer turning hard away into the fog. At that instant the torpedoes which she sought to avoid by the maneuver reached her and two tall white geysers with hearts of flame bloomed along her side, one amidships and one aft. You could see her roll to the shock and lurch awkwardly back again before her momentum carried her out of sight in the fog.

There was a great red glare and the thunder of another explosion beyond in the fog immediately afterward, but whether another of our torpedoes had

struck or a magazine had exploded I will never know. It was as certain as fate that she was done for, with little chance that any of her crew could survive her sudden death.

I think it was at least three months later that the German radio admitted her loss "in a heroic engagement with superior forces in which the British lost two cruisers and three destroyers."

The *Tremaine* now had a serious list to starboard added to her trim by the stern, but in the comparative silence of the moment I could hear a pump still bravely laboring somewhere under the wreckage amidships, and I don't know whether the tough old girl might have survived the pasting at point-blank range or not.

Thinking that the show was over, I turned to find Thompson fumbling in his buttonless coat for his pipe. He seemed to have the same indestructible quality as his ship. I started to make some inane remark to show my great regard for both when I was sharply interrupted by a machine-gun mounted directly above me that was cutting loose with an insane insistence.

Looking for its target, I saw the surviving torpedo boat break out of the fog on our starboard bow and come plowing toward us on one engine. The last I had seen of him, he had apparently given up and limped off into the mists, having serious trouble with an engine after being very roughly handled by our foc'sle gun. Now the foc'sle gun lay on its side, jammed halfway through a hole in the deck alongside it, with most of its crew scattered about what was left of the foc'sle. With the starboard midships gun gone, the pom-pom wrecked, and the after gun unable to bear on our bow, the torpedo boat had chosen his point of attack well.

Another machine-gun opened up from back aft, but it was like trying to stop a charging bull with a handful of rocks. The boat bored in to less than 300 yards, coughed out her two torpedoes, and arrogantly swerved off. But she'd overdone it a trifle.

With only a few seconds to live as the pair of torpedoes streaked straight and hot for their mark, our machine-gunners poured a last desperate burst into the retreating boat and caught her squarely in their cross-fire. In the face of the most violent compulsion to turn and dive over the side, I clung grimly to a twisted stanchion and watched our executionist falter on his course and slow rapidly as his lame engine coughed once or twice and quit abruptly under the hail of bullets.

Then both torpedoes struck in quick succession. I don't know just where, although I believe it must have been well aft of the bridge, as I am here to tell about it. I only know that the whole world seemed to erupt like a volcano and then cave in upon itself, with the sky falling directly on my head.

CHAPTER VI

NAVY MASQUERADE

THE next thing I remember is Thompson bending over me and shaking me. My first impression was that it had been hours or even days ago that the torpedo boats first attacked, although it couldn't have been more than ten or fifteen minutes earlier. Thompson seemed to be urging me to do something, but I couldn't make out what it was until my brain cleared a little and I heard him say, "Come on, Yank, we're leaving. You're not hurt."

I tried to sit up then, and realized that he wasn't bending over me at all, but was lying flat on the ship's side and holding on to my shoulders through the rail to keep me from sliding down the sloping bridge into the water lapping at the other side of it. The ship was lying very nearly all the way over on her starboard side and rapidly going down by the stern.

I grabbed the port bridge rail, just over my head, and managed to pull myself up on it.

"I'm O. K.," I said, rather uncertainly, and we both slid along the ship's side, over the slimy turn of her bilge, and dropped into the water. The keel was just rolling out as we left her, and in abandoning ship I ripped the seat out of my pants on a barnacle on her bot-

tom, but thought it not at all odd or comical at the time.

Thompson seemed to be all right, although he looked rather grotesque with his red thatch showing through a wide

We slid along the ship's side, over the slimy turn of her bilge, and dropped into the water.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
I. B. HAZELTON

rip in the top of his cap. There were another half-dozen men near us in the water, all swimming away from the ship as well as they could in their clothes, since the ship was making terrific threatening noises deep in her hull as she settled under. Nobody had had time to put on a life jacket.

When we were not more than fifty feet away from her the old *Tremaine* rolled her slim bow straight up in the air in a final death agony and backed rapidly and noisily into her grave, leaving us floundering alone in the cold water and the empty fog. The pulling-whaleboat, which had been secured astern since its employment earlier, came walking out of the mists with most of the after gun-crew at the oars, picking up men as it came. The motor of the launch, which had been similarly secured at the bow, sputtered a few times and throbbed into life not far away. There was a lone life-raft drifting nearby too, although, like the two boats, it held only a pitiful handful of men.

I was hauled into the whaleboat after the captain, whom I found lying where he had landed on the floor-boards. The men in the boat were so confounded by the spectacle of their distinguished commander lying at their feet instead of resuming his proper dignity in the stern-sheets that they simply stood and stared. I bent over Thompson quickly and discovered that what I had taken for his brick-red hair showing through a rip in his cap was actually blood soaking through it.

I peeled off the cap and found that a bad gash in his scalp was bleeding profusely. As the coxswain on No. 4 gun fumbled in the boat box in his haste to get out the medical kit, there was a hail from the motor-launch. I recognized the voice of Gunnery Lieutenant Mott.

"Have you got the captain?" he was asking.

The coxswain rather incredulously explained the situation to him while I got a dressing on Thompson's wound. Mott came aboard and while the two boats bumped and groaned together in the pale fog we got the bleeding stopped and a few sips of brandy out of the kit into the captain. It never occurred to us to relieve him of command so long as there was a chance of getting him on his feet. He was that sort of man.

卐 WHILE we worked, I asked Mott if he'd seen anything of Brumby or MacMorran. He simply shook his head grimly. I got the same answer when I asked about the two reserve officers we'd had. With four out of seven officers lost, I wondered how much of the crew was left, and said so.

Mott growled bitterly, "Just nineteen."

Thompson groaned and we looked down to see him grimace with pain.

"Just lie still and take it easy, old man," Mott said affectionately. "We'll be out of this in a while."

Thompson muttered, "Do you mean that out of my whole crew of a hundred and forty men there's only nineteen left?" and we could see that it wasn't his head but his conscience that was hurting him.

Mott nodded dumbly and Thompson lay there for a while as if he was suddenly too old to move. Then he stirred and sort of shouldered it off like it was a physical thing. "What time is it?" he said, sitting up slowly.

I glanced at the boat clock in the motor launch and said, "Five fifteen, Captain."

Thompson hauled himself to his feet and stood unsteadily, swaying with the slight motion of the boat, his head hanging. "How was it, Yank? The dawn, the sweeps, the *Luftwaffe*, the torpedo boats—and the troops?" He smiled wryly at me. "Seen any troops yet, Yank?"

I shook my head.

Thompson stared around into the silent hostility of the fog, now wanly filtering the first light of day. "Still plenty of time," he grunted. "And it'll be six hours before our motor-whaleboat even sights England." His voice was weighted with a hopelessness and misery that was so foreign to the man that it left us silent and embarrassed.

After what seemed a very long time Thompson gave orders to distribute the survivors in the motor-launch and

whaleboat, and took the latter in tow of the former, setting a compass course for Portsmouth and casting the empty life-raft adrift. It faded slowly out of sight astern, a dingy and ignoble marker of the grave of so many fighting men. When I recalled that Ober-leutnant Gerhardt and his men were among them I felt only a vicious satisfaction with the mean vagaries of war.

The launch labored along for less than five minutes before it coughed two or three times and quit dead. No amount of grinding the starter would make the motor come to life again. For the first time I was fully conscious of the strong odor of gasoline about the boat, and of the multitude of machine-gun bullet holes in the woodwork. It wasn't hard to guess our present trouble. The boat coxswain yanked off the after deck hatch, reached in, and after feeling around, withdrew his fingers and smelled them.

"Petrol," he announced glumly. "It's all run out in the bloody bilges through a couple of holes in the tank."

So we were helpless again, drifting in the fog not more than a half-mile from where we started. The pulling-whaleboat nudged up alongside and, after its men learned the worst, silence fell again while we all looked expectantly at Thompson, sitting in the stern sheets with his bandaged head in his hands.

It was some time before he stood up and looked around, while the two boats coasted dismally to a stop. "No wind," he said finally, "but we might as well get the spars and sails rigged anyhow. Rig one of the whaleboat's spars and one sail in each of the boats and then man the oars." His voice was flat as stale beer. The launch would be so awkward either to row or sail that I wondered why he didn't simply tow it with the pulling-whaleboat. But as usual, his decision proved to be fortunate.

The men were busily getting up the two masts and unfurling the whaleboat's old lug-sails from their yards when Thompson suddenly barked "*Silence!*" in a low but urgent tone.

In the cool white silence of the early morning fog we heard a big motor cough, sputter briefly, and stop two or three times in succession somewhere off to the east. Then with surprising clearness, the guttural monosyllables of a voice complaining loudly in German, to which an answering voice, equally angry, replied in the same tongue.

Thompson held up a hand to maintain our silence while listening intently to the sounds of a starter grinding behind the fog. When he stepped down from the thwart his sharp face held the same premature toughness, the same casual alertness that we'd known before the *Tremaine's* sinking. "That'll be our friends in the crippled motor-boat that torpedoed us," he said quietly. "They have a wireless, I believe."

THOMPSON must have been as aware as I was of the near impossibility of raising an English station with a small German voice set, to say nothing of successfully attacking an armed torpedo boat with a boatload of unarmed shipwrecked sailors. But he continued evenly, "Everyone keep absolutely quiet and carry out orders quickly. Everything

may depend on speed now. I'll do all the talking. Now pay attention."

He proceeded to order all canvas and line from the whaleboat into the launch. As if the canvas wasn't dirty and torn enough, he set the boat engineer to splashing it with dirty oil from the bilges. The sides of the motor launch he had coated so completely with engine grease that the already dirty gray paint was hardly recognizable. One torn and spattered sail was carelessly flung across the bow and allowed to drag in the water as if sloppily lowered from the mast forward. But when I realized that it effectively concealed both the boat's Navy numbers and its contours I began to see what was in Thompson's mind.

The other sail was piled carelessly over the engine hood, and coils of dirty line were strewn everywhere. The motor launch thwarts were thrown overboard so the pair of men who were detailed to the two sweeps had no place to sit. Thompson told them to stand up and push on the oars in the manner of Continental fishermen. When he had ordered them to jettison their Navy jumpers, roll up their trousers, and smear their dark jerseys with oil, they even looked the part. To complete the masquerade, the boat's oilskins were broken out and distributed haphazardly so that one man wore a jacket, another the oiled pants, and Thompson himself a sloppy oversized sou'wester. The sou'wester effectively covered his head bandage, and with the remains of his uniform coat discarded, the nondescript blue sweater he wore under it disguised him adequately, especially with a smear of black grease under his long nose and a smooth coat of engine oil darkening his ruddy features. My blue cap cover, pulled from my cap, made an authentic beret for one oarsman, and an engineman's red bandana a picturesque headdress for the other one.

But Thompson, the boat, and his two oarsmen were all that weren't still strictly Navy when the captain called again for attention. He stood on a thwart with an officer's .45 service automatic in each hand and listened a moment until he heard the continued efforts of the unseen motor-boat to get started again. Then he addressed the men. He was in a lighter mood than I'd seen him since I met him at Force Headquarters in Portsmouth a week ago.

"We're poor French fishermen lost in the fog," he grinned. "I speak the language some, and Sullivan here, who just happens to be a wireless operator, might possibly be useful in case we should stumble into a wireless set drifting around in the fog. Machinist's mate Burdette, at the other oar, may have a chance to exercise his genius with broken-down engines, too." Thompson stopped and grew serious. "But I may also need another man who's a dead shot with a service pistol at fifty yards, and Mr. Mott, I know, can't help me." He folded his arms, looking for the moment about as much like a poor French fisherman as Nelson at Trafalgar.

The men stirred uneasily, each one eyeing the other. There was eagerness in their faces, but no self-confidence. I suddenly shook off my observer's lethargy and said, "I held an expert pistol medal last year."

Thompson turned and appraised me deliberately. "Congratulations!" he said coolly, in a tone that indicated he was prepared for this. "But of course you're a neutral and can't do any shooting."

"That's just what you read in the newspapers!" I snapped resentfully. There was a delighted chuckle from the men.

"Oh." Thompson smiled. "Well, if that's the way it is, perhaps you would like to do a bit of shooting for us?" He handed one service pistol to me and slipped the other in the pocket of his borrowed trousers.

"It'll be a pleasure," I said, taking the gun. The men seemed inclined to cheer at this reverse Lend-Lease business, but Thompson was quick to speak again.

"All right, Mr. Mott," said the captain, "take all the remaining men in the whaleboat and pull as fast as you can just out of sight in the fog over there. Then sit tight and don't make a sound or a move until you hear me hail you, no matter what else you hear."

"Aye, aye, sir."

CHAPTER VII

—AND THE TROOPS?

WHEN the whaleboat had cast off, Thompson started his bizarre oarsmen rowing toward the clanking of hammer on metal that issued from the direction of our stalled enemy. I sat on a disorderly heap of gear in a borrowed jersey and sea-boots and dried out the captain's pistol while he jettisoned the brass poopdeck rail and tiller and fitted a broken length of oar to the rudder to steer with, as more becoming a fisherman. Progress of the heavy, twenty-six foot boat was maddeningly slow under the awkward efforts of the oarsmen.

"If my plans go right you'll have to shoot a couple of unsuspecting Jerries in cold blood," Thompson advised me casually. "Are you up to it?"

I gave him a look that would dispel any doubts. "What are your plans?"

Thompson leaned close and explained my part in his latest strategy. When he was through I nodded and informed him that he was crazy. "You'll never get a German radio set on your frequency even if you are lucky enough to get your hands on it," I told him.

Thompson winked solemnly. "I have a little idea that may get us around that," he muttered.

I crawled under the canvas alongside the engine hood as I'd been told, and fixed myself a little aperture about three inches square to fire through. Thompson piled a mess of line on top of the canvas and draped a few strands across my firing port. The muffled oars dipped and lifted quietly while the tinkering and voices ahead grew louder in the fog.

When the voices were quite distinct I felt someone fussing around close to me and heard Thompson's voice almost in my ear. "Don't make a move now, and keep your eyes open. The Jerries are in sight."

There was a nerve-racking silence for some minutes more while nothing but the blank face of the fog slipped slowly past my peep hole. It grew uncomfortably warm and stuffy under the canvas. Then a strange coarse voice, full of ignorance and despair, called close above me, *"Ohé! À quel côté Cherbourg?"* It was hard to realize it was Thompson.

Immediately there was an angry shout of surprise from up ahead, *"Halt machen! Wer da?"*

"Cherbourg!" wailed Thompson. *"À quel côté? Sommes égarês dans cette maudite brume!"*

"Dummkopf!" was the response. *"Sprechen das Deutsche! Wer da?"*

In the midst of this excited confusion of languages, neither of which made sense to me, I could hear our oars working more vigorously than ever.

"Français!" screamed Thompson. *"Pecheurs français! Regardez nos passeports. Sommes égarés!"* I heard him rattle some papers in his hand.

The drifting torpedo boat edged slowly into my sight, with only two of her crew visible on deck. One was standing at the near rail helplessly howling and gesticulating at us, while the second attempted to dismount the machine-gun from the bay on the far side of the boat, since it would not bear on us across the decks. The machine-gun bay on the side on which Thompson had approached was pretty well shot up, the gun pointing rigidly skyward through the shattered glass, apparently jammed. We were still well over a hundred yards off, but our oars were still working.

The petty officer at the rail was now alternately shouting *"Halt machen!"* at us in a somewhat apprehensive voice, and barking urgent commands at his man at the machine-gun, while Thompson continued to sustain the confusion by bellowing excited French at the top of his lungs. The machine-gun finally came out of its mount, and the second German came across the deck lugging it in his arms. As he laid it across the torpedo tube to cover us, Thompson ordered the oarsmen to stop rowing and we drifted slowly nearer under our momentum, with the muzzle of their gun trained dead on us.

Although Thompson kept chattering I knew he was just stalling now until the range had closed up enough for me to open fire.

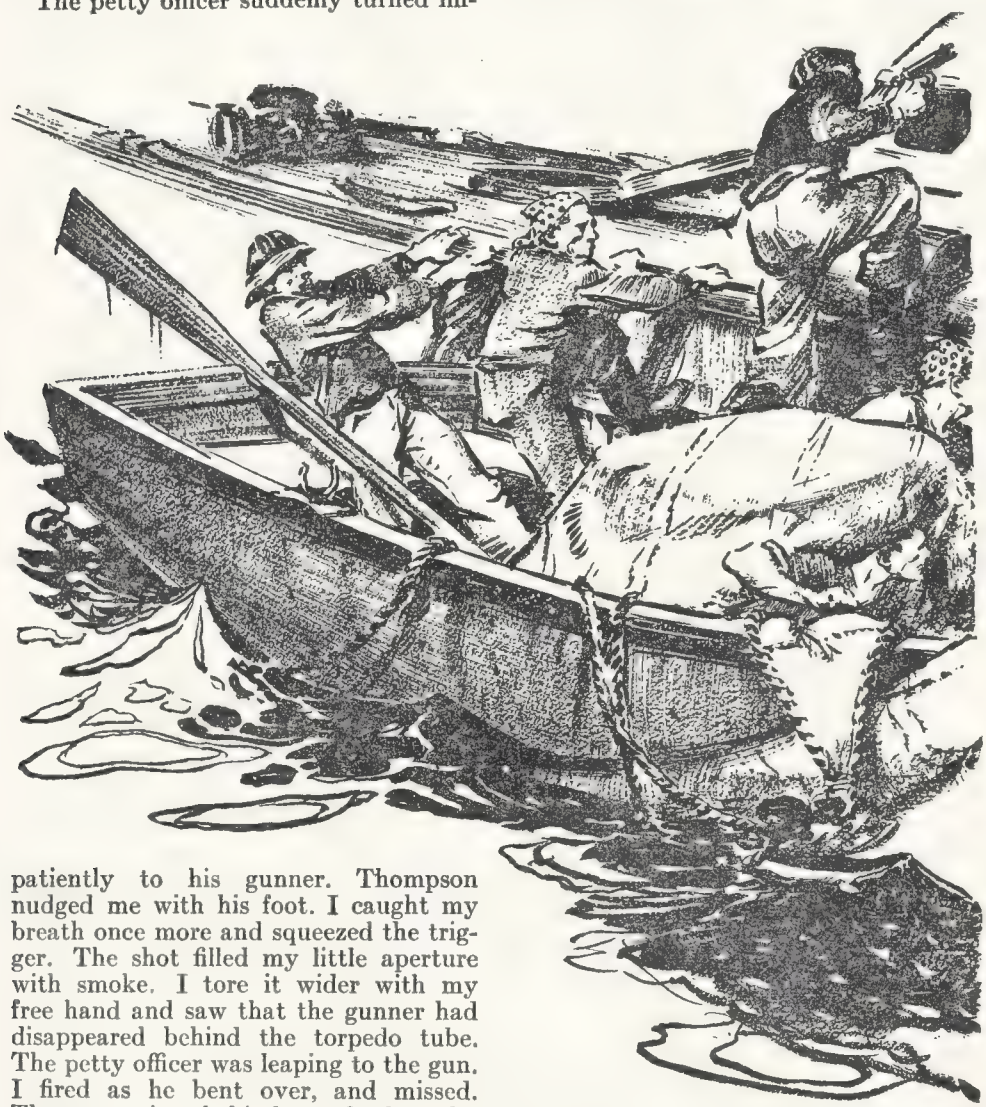
I kept a steady bead on the man

at the machine-gun, waiting for Thompson's signal. My hands persisted in sweating where I held the automatic, and it seemed that I would suffocate from holding my breath to steady my aim. I'd never killed a man, but it wasn't that that made me sweat. The range was still better than seventy-five yards, which is long for a pistol even when it's been carefully sighted in, as mine had not.

The petty officer suddenly turned impatiently to his gunner. Thompson nudged me with his foot. I caught my breath once more and squeezed the trigger. The shot filled my little aperture with smoke. I tore it wider with my free hand and saw that the gunner had disappeared behind the torpedo tube. The petty officer was leaping to the gun. I fired as he bent over, and missed. Thompson, just behind me, fired as the German slid behind the gun, and chipped paint from the torpedo tube.

I waited, holding my breath till a head came up behind the machine-gun sights. I was cold as ice now and the range was down to fifty yards. I fired carefully again. The German was flung back against the engine-room hatch and the machine-gun clattered overboard and splashed. No one moved on the torpedo boat.

We came alongside and clambered aboard with our guns out. The petty officer and his gunner were both sprawled



We came alongside and clambered aboard with our guns out.

on deck behind the torpedo tube with nasty holes in their heads. I felt nothing more than a great relief and a light-headed pride in my marksmanship.

Thompson said, "You take Burdette and look around below. Sullivan and I will get on the wireless."

Warning the machinist's mate to look

before he leaped, I sent him to the engine-room to survey the situation there, while I reconnoitered the living space through the skylight. Seeing no signs of life, I dropped down the hatch. There were four bunks in the cramped compartment and a man in each. Two were dead and one delirious. The other, with his head swathed in a bloody bandage, looked into the muzzle of my automatic and closed his eyes with a sigh. I ordered him out of his bunk, but as soon as his feet touched the floor he fainted.

Thompson's voice came down the hatch. "We'll have to get the bloody generator going to make the wireless work. See what you can do, will you?"

I went back to the engine-room and found Burdette fiddling with the port engine. Water was over the floor plates.

"Water pump's broken down," he informed me and pointed to the disassembled pump. "That must have been what they were working on."

"How about the other engine?"

He shook his head, indicating the intake manifold with a wave of his hand. It was full of bullet holes.

"O.K. Try to start the port engine without the water pump."

"It'll burn up, Lieutenant."

"All right, burn it up. The captain's got to have the generator going, if only for a few minutes."

The engine kicked off with a sputter and a roar. "Let her race!" I shrieked, and climbed out and ran forward.

Thompson stood over the radioman, who crouched in a little cubbyhole just under the deck forward of the pilot's cockpit, working the transmitter key.

"You'll have to make it snappy," I shouted. "The engine will overheat."

Thompson nodded without looking up, and we both stood there watching Sullivan work the key. I wondered why he wasn't using the microphone at his elbow, as it would have been a lot faster and simpler, but Thompson's ways were always devious to me.

SULLIVAN was still clicking his key with maddening deliberation when the boat shuddered a couple of times and jarred as if it had been rammed. The engine had simply stopped. In the sudden silence Sullivan spread his hands with a shrug and backed out of the little radio booth. "Dead," he said.

"Did you get it all off?" Thompson asked.

"The first transmission, sir."

Thompson said "Good," with less enthusiasm than I would have felt if I'd just put through an invasion warning to England. But then I recalled that it could hardly be much more than a shot in the dark unless Sullivan had worked a miracle with the German set.

Thompson asked me to hail the whaleboat. When I'd finally raised an answering hail from Lieutenant Mott I turned to find Thompson sitting on a hatch with his bandaged head in his hands.

"You'd better lie down and let Mott take over now, or you'll be passing out on us again."

"I'll be all right in a minute. Just the reaction, I guess. What time is it?"

The clock in the pilot cockpit said five after six. I stared out into the blind face of the fog with my head cocked for the sound of motors. A single plane buzzed some miles away above the quiet mists. The only other sound was the approaching creak of our whaleboat's oars in their gudgeons. "About time for the troops, isn't it?" I said uneasily.

Thompson lifted his head. "Not for a while yet. Maybe not at all now."

I looked at him sharply. He seemed perfectly well again. "You don't really think your warning to Portsmouth at this late hour is going to make any difference, do you?"

"I didn't warn Portsmouth, of course," announced Thompson casually. "Not a chance of getting this wireless on our frequency without a meter. So I just warned the Jerries."

"Warned the Germans! Of *what?*"

Thompson grinned broadly and fished in his pocket, beginning to enjoy himself as the strain came off. "Oh, all sorts of dire things, you know. Here." He handed me a crumpled German message blank. It was covered with gibberish in Thompson's handwriting.

"What's this?" I demanded.

"I'm not a bit potty in the head," he laughed and tapped the paper I held.

"That's the Jerries' own contact code, you know," he said conversationally. "Right out of the book there in the wireless booth. Wonderful things, contact codes; you don't even have to know the language particularly."

A great light began to dawn on me, and my face lit up with it.

"All you need to know is the words for types of ships, compass directions, places—things you hear listening to the German naval communiqués. This says, 'Contact, five thirty A. M. Six British battleships, four battlecruisers, two aircraft carriers, numerous cruisers and destroyers twenty-two miles north Point de Barfleur, course eastnortheast, (that's toward the Strait) speed twenty, fog.'"

Thompson grinned. "I laid it on a trifle thick," he went on, "and just to add a touch of realism I reported 'five boats this unit, one destroyer sunk.' Then on the second transmission, (very vital with such an important message) the power very conveniently failed and we went off the air—for good."

"But this torpedo boat would have already reported its engagement with the *Tremaine!*"

"Not with their engines broken down, and there weren't any other survivors."

I WAS too absorbed by the rarity of Thompson's genius to add anything else. The Germans, of course, would have to verify a contact report as vital as that before they could think of launching transports across the Channel with a chance of stumbling into such a force. And in this fog they'd search a long time for something that wasn't there.

Thompson rose with a chuckle. "The whole *Luftwaffe* should be whining around here soon, all set to knock bloody hell out of the main body of the British Navy—if they can only find it. Here comes the whaleboat."

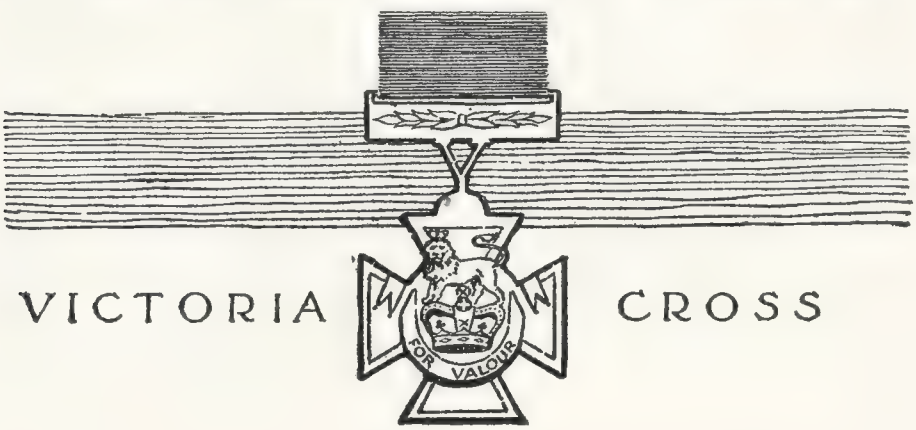
"What do we do now?"

"Rip out one of this tub's petrol tanks and put it in the motor launch. We should be home for dinner tonight. You'll notice I moved that contact well east of here to keep the Jerries out of our hair on our way home."

From eight o'clock on, while the motor launch, with the pulling-whaleboat in tow, chugged confidently through the fog toward England, the clear skies somewhere far above hummed with the angry swarms of Nazis on the hunt. It was one of those spring days when the R.A.F. had a Roman holiday.

At Weymouth that evening we learned that our motor-whaleboat had come sputtering in around noon and Clayton had put his momentous warning through to headquarters immediately. But as you are no doubt well aware, the invasion simply didn't come off that foggy fifteenth of March. Nor even since.

How much a young Canadian captain and an old American destroyer had to do with this I can't say, but the last time I heard of Peter Thompson he was in command of his fourth destroyer, with a V.C. added to his illustrious name. And I *can* say that now that the United States is officially in the war, I for one am damned glad to know that Lieutenant-Commander Peter Thompson, R.N., D.S.O., V.C., is on our side.



ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

The door opened wide and Yussef appeared. Instantly he was seized by two of Bonaparte's soldiers.

BLOW, BUGLES!

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

BLOW, bugles, blow! Invisible clarions of destiny, unheard by men, announcing to future ages that the decrees of fate are immutable; that the will of the gods may tremble and rock and reel, yet can never be changed.

They blew in Egypt, those bugles of destiny, under the quivering white heat of the Sun-god, Ra; no man heard them, yet the world shook, and the stars shivered in their courses, and for a moment Kismet, the inexorable master of all men, seemed shattered and futile. This was the manner of it, as you may find written in the Coptic Chronicles by the holy

man of Cairo, Sheikh El Mohdi, who saw these things with his own eyes—

SULTAN EL KHEBIR, the Great Sultan, ruled Cairo and all Egypt in those days. He lived in the fabulously luxurious palace of the Mameluke prince, Elfi Bey, and the eastern world trembled before him. Yet he was a small man, sallow, with lanky hair that hung about his face, and he suffered grievously with the itch.

With his army he had seized upon the riches of Egypt, had this sallow little Corsican, and now held it under the flag of France. His soldiers knew him as Buonaparte; as one of them wrote, *He won respect for his tactical genius, but he did not have the knack of making his men love him.*

This palatial headquarters was of three stories surrounding a glorious courtyard sweet with fountains and flowering trees. The richest shawls and rugs of the Orient, the most glorious Persian tiles, were here; the woodwork was inlaid with ivory and pearl shell, carven marble columns supported the stairs, and the adjacent stable held the finest Arabian steeds. Amid this luxury was installed the poverty-stricken little man who now called himself Sultan el Khebir, and whose artillery dominated the city from the high citadel above.

He lived alone with his aides. Sometimes he sought women, or they were brought to him, in this gorgeous palace upon the great Ezbekhieh Square. Few of them pleased him; he was always lonely, always seeking afar what he could never find; the love of men. He had only one comrade whom he trusted, General Junot, a gruff, illiterate, cynical fellow who had risen from the ranks.

It was the Seventh Year of the French Republic; that is to say, 1798.

The little Corsican had a superabundant vitality; he was in everything, went everywhere, plunged at whatever offered. Plagued by the itch, infected when deluged with the blood of a soldier whose head was carried away by a cannon ball, he was never still. Day and night he was on the go, planning, writing, organizing, riding, giving audiences, investigating strange and curious things and places.

He was a great believer in magic and sorcery and dreams, as the Arabs were quick to learn. There were Arabs and Turks in Cairo, and Copts by the thousand; the Copts were the people of Egypt, oppressed by the Moslems yet retaining their own ancient religion. Sultan el Khebir set them free and they became his friends and adherents; although, because he and some of his soldiers and generals proclaimed themselves Mohammedans, the Copts did not wholly trust him.

Here comes into the story Yussef Ali the Hazrami, a young man handsome and subtle, greatly gifted in many ways, who spoke excellent French. He had learned it in Stamboul, while serving the Sultan there, and he came to the headquarters sentries asking audience with Sultan El Khebir.

Now, this Corsican sultan and his officers and aides had never heard the famed proverb of Arabia, which runs: "If you meet a Hazrami and a cobra in your path, spare the cobra." A saying well founded, since the men of Hadramaut anciently won a reputation for audacity and bloody work that spread afar, if not so far as France.

Beauharnais, stepson and chief aide of the Corsican, talked with Yussef Ali, demanding his business with the commander-in-chief. Yussef evaded, but finally came to the point.

"I am come to offer him the greatest treasure and the greatest beauty in Egypt, hidden away by the lord of the Mamelukes when they fled. I can grant any desire of his heart."

The aide went back to give this message to Bonaparte, as the Corsican was now spelling his name. He was rather stiffish about it, too. In the matter of carnal desire, the Army of Egypt affected no prudery whatever; but after all, Beauharnais was a stepson. The Corsican was married to his mother, Josephine.

Bonaparte interrupted his dictation to hear the message, and broke into a hearty laugh. In seizing Egypt from the Mamelukes, the army had taken over palaces and women and treasure galore,

but was always on the trail of some new hidden spoil. That Yussef Ali was betraying some such loot to the conqueror, was obvious.

"Tell him," said the Corsican, "that if he can cure this damnable itch of mine, I'll give him a hearing. Have him searched for weapons."

"That has been done; he has none," said Beauharnais, and went out with his message.

Yussef Ali merely smiled at hearing it. "Cure the itch? By Allah, nothing is easier! It is written in the stars that my mistress would heal all the ills of Sultan el Khebir."

So the fellow was something of an astrologer? Beauharnais took back this word, and the Corsican ordered him to admit the Hazrami. A firm belief in destiny, a credence in the stars and what they said, was part of Bonaparte's makeup. The secretaries were dismissed, and with Beauharnais and a couple of guards on hand, Yussef was led into the courtyard with its fountains and soft cushions and splendid luxury. He fell on his face before Bonaparte, with a lengthy eulogy, which the general brusquely interrupted.

"If you have business, state it! Who sent you here?" Yussef rose, with a certain dignity, as he faced the thin, sallow little man.

"The stars sent me, to give into your hand the greatest beauty and treasure of Egypt!"

"Meaning that you wish to betray someone or something, at a price," said Bonaparte with cynical comprehension. "Well, at what price?"

"Lord, the chief of the Mamelukes left this woman hidden in a secret palace; she is the most glorious of all women, surrounded by surpassing treasures! She has the secret of healing every ill; she has heard your name and will be dazzled by your splendor. I ask no price of your favor, unless you have an old and outworn horse or mule which your grace would turn over to me."

"As the woman is, so shall be the horse," said Bonaparte, then beckoned his aide down the patio, beyond earshot of the Hazrami.

"An odd affair, Eugene!" said he thoughtfully. "Woman and treasure; tempting, eh? A secret palace of the Mameluke chief, eh? Either it is a trap of some kind, or well worth while. After I speak with this rascal further, take him over to the Institute and have some of our savants test his knowledge of astrology."

HE STRODE back toward the waiting Hazrami. Like his officers, he made an odd figure in his looted finery, a huge Mameluke sabre clapping at his heels, jeweled poniard at his belt, a handsome cashmere shawl about his waist. He halted in front of Yussef and eyed him for a moment.

"Well? What do you propose?" he demanded. "Speak the truth, and you shall have the best horse in my stables. Lie, and you shall be beaten to death with the bastinado. Are you willing to take me to this hidden palace now, at once?"

"Allah forbid, master!" exclaimed Yussef. "It is guarded by Sudanese slaves, who keep lamps burning and ready; they are ordered to fire the house instantly, if the French enter. They must be surprised and killed, either in the very early morning or during the siesta hour, when all the world sleeps."

This made sense. The woodwork of any Cairene house, after generations of this dry desert air, would go up like tender at a spark of fire.

"Very well," said Bonaparte. "How to find the place?"

"It is in the Street of Victories, lord; not far from here. Directly opposite the Mosque of Sultan Bebars are old and ruined houses. It is the quarter of camel-drivers. In one of the walls is a closed, solid door, on which is painted the Hand of Fatima, in blue paint. I shall be waiting to open this door to your knock, at whatever hour you say."

"Very well," said Bonaparte. "Now go and talk to some of my wise men about the stars, and when you return I'll set the time."

Beauharnais took the Hazrami away, and the Corsican sent for Junot, whose cynical devotion was more to his taste in this venture than the cold eye of his stepson.

Bluff Junot listened with a grin to the story. A man was sent to investigate; he came back reporting that the door with the so-called hand, in reality derived from the Arabic script of the word *Allah*, was precisely as said.

"An excellent place to hide luxury, amid these ruins," said Junot. "But this may be a trap; these Arabs hate us like poison."

"Nothing risked, nothing won," said the Corsican. "We'll test it out at dawn tomorrow. Have a dozen of your best men here before daylight. When this rascal opens the door, seize him instantly. We'll take no chances. Let each man have pistols and cold steel."

"Oh, I'm to be the one who risks his neck, eh?" Junot broke into a laugh. "Very well; I accept! And I'll have men posted in all the streets around, just in case this turns out to be some cut-throat project of assassination."

So it was arranged. When Yussef returned, after proving to several members of the French party of savants that he really knew astrology, if not astronomy, the rendezvous was made and he departed bearing a present or two. The handsome, intelligent Arab had made a deep impression on all who met him; but the Corsican cautioned Beauharnais to say nothing to anyone about the man or his errand.

"Our good Junot will investigate tomorrow," he said carelessly. "He rather suspects it may be a murder trap."

"More than likely," assented the aide. "You know how many of our men suffered, until we made the chief Arabs hostages, and shot a few of them. One cannot be too careful."

Bonaparte was very cheerful that evening.

The Army of Egypt was not, as yet, at war with Turkey. The land had been seized from the grip of the Mameluke sultans, who were supported by wandering Arab tribes; but the Sultan at Stamboul was treated with great deference by Bonaparte, who made pretence, as many were in reality, of being a Mohammedan convert. Thus, except for the few Mamelukes who remained afar in Upper Egypt, with the cavalry in pursuit of them, Egypt was at peace. The French rule was completely accepted, and the horizon was untroubled by any foe, except the English fleet.

No wonder the sallow little Corsican was cheerful. In Europe, he had led France to a triumphant peace over all her foes, except England. He, the son of poverty and squalor, had become violently great, wealthy, assured; now he had seized Egypt, had made himself Sultan el Khebir. He did what he willed, good or bad. If he could not make friends, he could make himself feared—and he did.

Here in Cairo, he had shot Arabs and Mamelukes without cessation; every day the firing squads had rattled away. Now they feared him, and all was calm. To him, life meant nothing, except his own. His was the supreme destiny. If an order sacrificed a thousand men, he gave it without hesitation or second thought. But neither he nor the clever surgeons could cure the itch that plagued him day and night.

At the back of his mind was thought of this, rather than lovely woman or countless treasure. That most appealed to him in the story of Yussef Ali of Hadramaut.

IN THE grayness before the dawn, hooves stirred the dusty street in front of the palace; low orders sounded, parties of cavalry filed off into the city streets beyond the central square. One group passed directly to the Street of Victory and to the Mosque of Sultan Bebars where, well away from the mosque, the men dismounted.

Junot had neglected no precaution. Natives of the watch, under French officers, now appeared and reported everything clear in the vicinity. Bonaparte, muffled in a huge cloak against the morning chill, led the way down the street. Junot and the half dozen men fell in about him. There was the door painted with the blue Hand of Fatima, confronting them.

The Corsican rapped with his pistol-butt. The door swung a little open, the voice of Yussef spoke, and Bonaparte made reply. The door opened wide and Yussef appeared; instantly, he was seized by two men. He put up no struggle, but looked about indignantly.

"Fools! Instead of fighting me, get inside and take care of the two Sudanese who are on guard! You will find them at the entrance to the stairs."

Junot plunged into the doorway, with four men behind him, and vanished from sight.

Bonaparte waited, pawing at his scabby eczema and cursing under his breath. The two men holding Yussef stood immobile. Yussef himself listened in suspense. Nothing was heard, nothing happened. Then Yussef spoke quietly to the Corsican.

"When you are satisfied all is as I said, let me guide you and your men. Nothing here matters except the Lady Zaira and her quarters. Once you hold her safe, you hold all. The slaves will not leave. It is necessary only to guard the doors of her apartment."

Bonaparte nodded comprehension. Another moment, and a step sounded; it was Junot. He came back into the doorway. His sabre dripped blood.

"Well, come along!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "Nothing to worry about."

A few slaves; two more Sudanese who had to be killed with the sword-edge; a groom who tried to escape by way of the stables and did not—that was all. In the stables, which formed an integral part of every wealthy Arab's house, were two magnificent horses. The house was a veritable palace of oriental luxury, but Bonaparte strode through it unseeing, and halted with Yussef Ali at the door of the woman's apartment on the second floor. Two girl slaves stood barring the way, terrorized, yet determined.

"Lord," interrupted Yussef, translating their babble, "they say that Lady Zaira will descend to the courtyard in five minutes. It were wise to assent. The only exit from her rooms is by these doors, and these stairs to the patio."

Bonaparte, avidly curious, assented, and joined Junot in the courtyard. The men were stationed as guards outside. Junot smoked his pipe and chatted with Yussef, while the Corsican paced up and down.

Small as it was, the patio was luxurious. A plane tree rose beside the central fountain and orange trees perfumed the air. The stairs that ascended outside the house were of delicate marble arches and glowing tiles. Cushions and rugs of the finest and rarest weaves were heaped about the fountains. The lamps were of silver and rare glass, stamped with the arms of Mameluke sultans.

Yussef had said that Lady Zaira, like himself, spoke French and had dazzling golden hair. Now, this whole matter was in no way unusual. The Mamelukes, themselves slaves in the beginning, had women of all nations in the slave-marts of Cairo; and since taking the city, the French had unearthed some extremely curious cases, and had rescued a number of unhappy creatures. Nothing was impossible, as Bonaparte well knew.

Junot, with an exclamation, laid aside his pipe and stiffened. Yussef stood in an attitude of respect. Like them, Bonaparte lifted his eyes and then remained motionless, even incredulous. For Lady Zaira was descending the stairs, alone. And like other ladies of Egypt, she was veiled so closely that only one eye showed, though her garments were of filmy gauze such as the Pharaohs and their ladies had worn. Moslem modesty applied chiefly to the head.

Thus, her grace was apparent, and one could readily guess at the divine beauty of henna-touched feet and golden limbs. She came toward the fountain, saluted Bonaparte in the Arabic fashion, and made herself comfortable amid the cushions in the shade of the plane tree.

"Greeting, Sultan el Khebir. May Allah lengthen your days!" she said in French that was fluent, but badly accented. "I am your slave."

"No, no," said Bonaparte, seating himself beside her. "You are free, lady."

"Then I become a slave once more, in order to serve you," she rejoined. "This is your house; all that is in it belongs to you. And when you return, I shall reveal to you where the Mameluke treasures are hidden."

"Return?" echoed Bonaparte in surprise. He glanced at Junot; only the two of them had known of the trip in prospect.

"Yes." Her laugh was silvery-sweet. "You go to danger. Ask Yussef about the details; he discovered it in preparing your horoscope."

"Oh!" said Bonaparte. "Suppose you ask him, Junot. Keep him out of earshot."

"Not to mention myself, eh?" said Junot, in cynical good humor. He rose, beckoned to Yussef, and strolled away with him.

Bonaparte turned to the lady. "Zaira? Is that your name?"

"Yes. My mother was French, my father Circassian—a prince."

"Very well. Let me see your face. Unveil."

"Lord!" Hauteur crept into her voice; she recoiled a little. "Before other men, that is a crime and a shame! Upon your return, come to my rooms, and your will shall then be mine in all things. I have no desire except to serve you."

Bonaparte knew the Arab feelings about baring the face in view of men, and did not insist. Indeed, he had no chance, for now she extended her hand to him, giving him a large glass vial of dark liquid. He noted the slender beauty, the youthful grace of her fingers, and the immense emerald ring on her thumb, in native fashion.

"Yussef has told me of your trouble, my lord," she said, with a charming mixture of Arab submission and personal pride. "I am skilled in curing ills. My father taught me. Put ten drops of this in the water of your bath. Then bathe not again for three days. Then another ten drops; bathe not afresh for another three days. Repeat once more, and your sickness will be cured."

Bonaparte reflected that this would require ten days; it was the extent of

his planned expedition away from Cairo. "In ten days, Zaira," he said impetuously, "I shall return. If you speak the truth, if I am healed and well, ask what you will of me and it shall be granted!"

"Lord, I ask only to serve your happiness," said she, and extended her hand. Bonaparte seized it and kissed her fingers and she laughed a little. "But, my lord, do not forget the warning!" she added. "And leave guards at my house door, I pray you, for my protection."

With this, she rose and glided away, passed up the stairs, and was gone.

JUNOT brought Yussef Ali to the Corsican, and with a significant wink said Bonaparte had better question the man himself. Yussef, however, poured forth his story without questioning. Danger? Yes. He had seen in the stars that Sultan el Khebir stood in danger of death, within the next ten days. Death in what form, then? By drowning, said he, whereat Junot guffawed; but Bonaparte, who never ridiculed any prophecy, looked thoughtful.

"Where is this horoscope you have drawn?" he asked. "I'd like to see it myself."

Yussef spread his hands. "Lord, it is barely begun. A horoscope cannot be finished in a day's time; it requires much study. Any fool can set down the position and figures of the stars, but what makes an astrologer great is his ability to deduce the future from these positions."

"Very well; when can you bring me the finished horoscope?"

"In two weeks or less, master. I must go afar into the desert to work upon it."

"Then take the two horses here in this stable, as your reward," said Bonaparte.

"I must have a passport before I can leave or enter the gates," Yussef said. This was not entirely true, but since he wanted a passport, Bonaparte told Junot to give him one.

If Bonaparte was thoroughly alive to the proximity of a charming woman, he was also alive to the possibility of assassination. He not only set guards over the house of Lady Zaira, but he had it watched by Copts of his secret service. And before taking any of that medicine in his bath, he had a double dose of it given to a slave; finding the results not bad, he took it himself as ordered, and next morning left Cairo.

He had long planned this trip, to satisfy his own curiosity. With three hundred men, he rode to Suez. He desired to see if anything remained of the canal of Sesostris, who had in ancient days connected the Red Sea with the Nile and the Mediterranean. He found the canal and traced it to its end in the Bitter Lakes. What was more, he crossed the Red Sea, just as Moses had done, dry shod.

This curious feat was due to an Arab guide, who knew where, at low tide, one night find dry sand all the way across; this was because the wind had pushed back the waters for the past day or so. So Bonaparte crossed, and went on to explore in search of the alleged Wells of Moses. Then he started back, and instead of imitating Moses, came close to sharing the fate of Pharaoh and the Egyptian host.

The tide had come in, meantime; and the Arab guide had stolen enough brandy to make him gloriously drunk. With the setting sun, darkness came down fast. Before the guide knew himself hopelessly lost, the horses were swimming, the sandbanks were gone, and panic seized on everyone. Everyone, that is, except the sallow little Corsican, who calmly and quietly gave orders that resulted in safety to all.

"Well, I have come close to death by drowning," he wrote Junot, whom he had left in charge of Cairo. "Also, the itch has vanished, I trust for good. Thus it is evident that we have friends, not enemies, in the Street of Victories. Keep the house well guarded."

Almost upon the heels of this letter, he was back in Cairo himself, eager, brimming with energy. When the most pressing of public business was over, he plunged headlong into the question of Lady Zaira. Yussef Ali was still somewhere out in the desert, it seemed.

The spies had brief reports for him. No one entered or left the house except the two slaves who did the market-

ing. The guards had not been troubled. Lady Zaira had not been seen by anyone. Bonaparte's heart leaped; and next afternoon, although the promised ten days were not quite up, he rode unannounced to her house, left his guards outside, and entered.

Impetuous as he was, filled with impatient and awkward *gaucherie* that brooked no denials, he came to the door of her apartment. The slave-girls halted him. He brushed them aside, smashed open the locked door of ancient inlaid wood, and to his amazement found Lady Zaira awaiting him, veiled and hidden, seated on a divan.

"Greeting," she said, before he could speak. "Are you healed? Remember what you promised, if you came back cured."

"Oh!" He was taken aback, chagrined, dismayed. "True. I promised whatever you might ask. Well, I am healed! So what do you desire, fair lady?"

"Three days," said she, "before you ask me to unveil or show you the treasure of the Mamelukes. That is all. You may come when you like; indeed, I shall be most happy to see you at any time. But this is the anniversary of my father's death. Until another three days, my mourning will not be laid aside."

Bonaparte, sullen and a little angry, yielded. Almost at once, however, his anger was dissipated and a joyous amazement rose within him. For, as he sat talking, he discovered that this woman had a vivid intelligence. More, without effort she flung new light upon half a dozen of the social and economic matters that worried him.

He was, at this time, completing the organization of his Egyptian government. He had run into numberless difficulties of race, religion and custom that threatened his new administration from a dozen different angles. To his startled questions, Lady Zaira returned gay replies; but beneath her merry words lay sound sense and a remarkable appreciation of values. In effect, he found her an adviser worth all his council of wise men put together.

DURING the next three days, in the keeping of his promise, Bonaparte became a frequent visitor to the house of Lady Zaira. His best men were stationed there as guards. He came at any hour, always in a fury of haste, always departing calmed and advised. He brought her his troubles as they arose, and found them neatly solved for him. He talked with her lengthily, took her into his confidence here and there, forgot himself when he was alone with her and showed her the burning fury of spirit that underlay the outward semblance of the Corsican.

So the three days passed. Bonaparte had, actually, forgotten about the Mameluke treasure she was to turn over to him; he was thinking only of her. He was in furious love with a woman whose face he had not seen.

He admitted it frankly, when he came to her and asked her to unveil. She put up her hands and laid the veil away; for this was in the privacy of her own rooms. He looked into her face and kissed her fingers in passionate abandon.

BEHAVE!

Don't cough in public places. Carry with you a box of delicious Smith Brothers Cough Drops. (Black or Menthol, 5¢.)

Smith Bros. Cough Drops are the only drops containing VITAMIN A

Vitamin A (Carotene) raises the resistance of mucous membranes of nose and throat to cold infections, when lack of resistance is due to Vitamin A deficiency.

"And the treasure?" she said, laughing. Her laugh was adorable.

"Devil take the treasure! All that matters is you," he cried.

"Then tomorrow, the treasure. . ."

Later, she looked into his face, as she lay in his arms, and whispered: "Promise me one thing, one thing!"

"Yes," said Bonaparte quickly.

"Tell me when he comes back, the astrologer, Yussef Ali the Hazrami," she said. Emotion swept her, agitation leaped in her eyes. "Let me know when he comes, at once! Promise!"

"Very well," said Bonaparte carelessly. "When he returns from the desert, you shall know of it at once."

She smiled again. For a moment she had heard, distinctly, the far off bugles of destiny that no one else could hear or imagine . . . those silvery voices blowing down the world their clarions of fated doom.

On the morrow a letter came from Constantinople to General Dugua, governor of Cairo. He read it and laid it aside, thinking little of it at the moment. Later in the day he was riding over to the suburb of Bulac, with Junot, to lay out the new barracks. He would speak to Junot of the matter then, he reflected. Time enough. There was nothing to warn honest, blunt Dugua that time lacked, that destiny was trembling, and that this day meant all things to him, to the army, to France itself. So he did not hurry about telling Junot of the odd letter from Stamboul.

It was late in the afternoon, and they had agreed on the barracks plans, when Dugua spoke, remembering the matter.

"Oh, do you recall that I mentioned an Englishman, whom I met in Paris when he was a prisoner there? A man named Smith—Sydney Smith—a naval officer."

"I remember, yes," said Junot, laughing. "His escape back to England was something of a classic, eh?"

"Well, he is in Stamboul, some sort of emissary from England to the Porte," Dugua went on. "I had an odd letter today from him, brought by a merchant. This Smith is very touchy upon his honor, you understand. He has heard of some scheme to assassinate Bonaparte, and wrote to warn me. Punctilious fellow, very."

"That's one name for it." Junot, who was not punctilious, grimaced. "What sort of scheme? Why should the Turks assassinate him, anyway?"

"They're afraid of him," said Dugua. "Oh, this was something about a clever fellow who spoke French; I forget the details. I sent the letter to the General's secretary. The fellow stood to win a huge sum from the Porte, if he accomplished Bonaparte's death inside another month. Our English friend said to have a care. The rascal is young, able and intelligent; he hates us bitterly."

"Did Smith give his name?" asked Junot carelessly.

"Yes. One of these blasted Arabic names. Hussein . . . no, Yussef, that's it. Yussef Ali, from a place called Hadramaut."

Junot drew rein sharply. His jaw fell; he stared at the astonished Dugua for a moment, then put spurs to his horse. But, even as he spurred, honest Junot knew that he must be too late, for Bonaparte had left headquarters a couple of hours before with Yussef the Hazrami.

Yussef had turned up unexpectedly. His pass got him through the outer guards at headquarters; then Junot himself had taken him on into the courtyard, where Bonaparte paced up and down dictating letters and orders. The Corsican swung about at sight of Yussef.

"So it's you, star-gazer!" he exclaimed. "Where's that horoscope you promised?"

"Finished, and waiting for you, lord," responded Yussef, saluting low. "A scribe is making a fair copy of it now. Have my predictions been fulfilled? Did you find beauty and treasure in that house?"

"Oh, treasure!" said Bonaparte. "This is the day, yes. Lady Zaira wanted to be told if you turned up. I must send her word. Better, I'll go myself. The treasure, eh? Junot, come with me . . . no, no, you're going to Bulac with Dugua to see about the barracks. Go along. I'll have news of that treasure for you, tonight. Upon my word, I had forgotten about it! A dozen men of the guard, Junot."

Yussef asked permission to wash at the fountain. It was granted. He laid

aside his long burnous and showed himself naked except for a loincloth, as he made his ablutions. Junot gave him a glance and a nod; anyone could see the fellow had no weapon of any kind.

Thus, with the mounted escort, Bonaparte clattered away toward the Street of Victories, taking Yussef along.

SO THE Corsican came to the house of Lady Zaira, sent the guards carelessly away, and entered in company with Yussef. The guards inside the place saluted, and informed him that the siesta hour was not finished, and that Lady Zaira and her women were still asleep. Yussef laughed.

"No matter, my lord!" he said. "I can show you the spot in the house where the treasure lies hidden, if you care to look with me. We'll have a surprise for Lady Zaira."

No suspicion occurred to Bonaparte. Guards were close within call; besides, he regarded Yussef as a faithful servitor and ally. He assented at once.

Yussef led the way. Instead of mounting to the quarters of the women, he went into the large reception room on the ground floor, guided the Corsican to the far corner and pointed to the fretted and inlaid cedar planks of the wall. Smiling, he pointed to two bits of carven ivory set into the wood.

"Press these, lord, and call upon Allah to reveal the secret!"

Bonaparte laughed grimly. "Give, O Allah, or I take!" he said, and leaned forward to press the two spots. With a grating noise, a door-like section of the wall opened, to reveal a high but narrow corridor that went into darkness. Yussef reached forward and took a glass lamp from a niche within, and set about striking fire.

"Careful, lord!" he warned. "Wait for a light, lest we find a snake or a scorpion. This opening widens into a small room, where the treasure is awaiting us. And," he added, forcefully, "such a treasure as a man, be he sultan or slave, finds but once in a lifetime!"

The lamp blazed up. Yussef held it aloft, and a dozen feet away Bonaparte could see that the corridor widened. Yussef went ahead, and the Corsican followed, cautiously. They came to the wide spot. Here, indeed, was a tiny room about eight feet square. It was quite empty, except for a box that stood in one corner. Upon the box lay a pair of immensely long Arab pistols, inlaid with silver, and a horn of powder.

Yussef went straight to this box, set the lamp on it, and busied himself.

"Well?" demanded Bonaparte, impatiently. "What are you doing?"

"Putting fresh priming in this pistol," said Yussef, and swung around. The light struck upon his face; a new face, radiant with hatred and suppressed fury. The pistol lifted in his hand. It covered the Corsican.

"Fool!" snarled Yussef. "No one can hear; no one will know! You came here to perish, do you understand? Everything was done in order that this moment should come to pass, this moment when you die!"

The truth flashed upon Bonaparte. He was lost, and knew it—utterly lost. True, he had his long poniard, but the pistol would flash death before he could use it. He stood irresolute, sweating, aghast.

Yussef laughed curtly. "Sultan el Khebir!" he said in cruel mockery. "In the moment of death, you see the truth, eh? You hear the wings of death's angels; listen, listen! You can hear the bugles of destiny blowing as you die, your accursed life cut short—"

A rush of soft naked feet in the darkness; a voice crying sharply.

"Yussef! Wait, wait!"

She was there, in the passage. Bonaparte could see only a flash of white, but he could sense her perfumes. He cursed under his breath. Her presence there cut off all escape. He had been on the point of a desperate dash for it. Useless now! She was in the plot, too. . .

"You must not!" Her voice lifted shrilly with its frantic, imperative urge. "He is not what you said! He is no cruel monster. He is a young man filled with greatness! I cannot let you do this thing. Stop it, stop, do you hear?"

From the Arab came an explosion of furious speech. A wild cry broke from Lady Zaira. Suddenly she came between

Bonaparte and the light. The pistol roared; smoke and flame gushed out.

The Corsican, flung back against the wall, gripped at his long dagger. The lamp had been knocked over; everything was dark, and in this darkness, Bonaparte struck out blindly. He did not, at once, know what had happened. He found Yussef grappling him, striking at him with the pistol, and felt his own blade drive into the man, again and again. The pistol fell, then Yussef crumpled.

SO PASSED the moment that should have changed the history of the world.

Presently Bonaparte stooped to the lifeless thing at his feet. His hand touched her hand; it was cold. The bullet, meant for him, had killed her.

He stepped out of the passage into the large room, and closed the door behind him. There was no alarm. Nothing had been heard. For a space he stood there motionless, staring at the sunlit courtyard and the fountains. He recalled the words of Yussef, now so ominous and significant—"such a treasure as a man, be he slave or sultan, finds but once in a lifetime!" And that mention of curing all ills. . . . Fool, fool that he had been! This Arab, so sardonic and assured, had told him the truth and he had been blind to it!

Then he saw Junot coming through the courtyard, running, calling. Bonaparte strode out to meet him. With a panting gasp of relief, Junot plunged to a halt at sight of him.

"Then I am in time!" he exclaimed.

"For what?" demanded Bonaparte.

"To warn you! That rascal Yussef was an assassin!"

The sallow Corsican regarded him impassively. "So I have already learned, my good Junot," he said. Clasping his hands behind his back, he looked up at the sky. A deep breath shook him. "He is gone. And she . . . she is gone also. They will not return. Have this place closed up and the doors sealed, and left so."

He was silent for a moment while Junot stared at him wide-eyed, uncomprehending; but then, Junot seldom understood this strange little man.

"The bugles of destiny!" Bonaparte continued slowly. "Singular words! I wonder what he meant by them?"

The world would know, one day.

SEÑOR REDHEAD

By H. P. S. GREENE

Lopez' American and Yaqui hunters took a tremendous toll from the assailants.

A FACT STORY

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WERT

THE morning of April 13, 1911 dawned like almost any other day at Agua Prieta, Sonora, which lies on the Mexican Border just south of the smelter city of Douglas, Arizona. At first it was clear and cool, then it warmed up as the sun rose higher. Toward noon, the usual crowd was waiting for the tri-weekly mixed train to arrive from the mining town of Nacozari, about eighty miles south.

There were American mining and business men, impatient because the train was late; trig Mexican officials, and ragged, barefoot soldiers, leaning on

their rusty old Mauser rifles. There were chattering women, playing children, scratching dogs, and even a couple of stray burros.

When the agent came out of the station, men asked him how late the train was, and when it would get in.

"I don't know," he replied with a puzzled air. "The wire is dead. I can't get anyone at all on it."

Somebody suggested that maybe Red Lopez had held up the train and cut the wire. Born in Tucson, Arizona, the son of a redheaded Irishman and a Mexican woman, Arturo Lopez, redheaded himself and covered with large freckles, was one of the most daring and spectacular characters ever to flourish along the Mexican Border. He liked Americans and Yaqui Indians, and only tolerated Mexicans. For months rumors had been circulating that he had recruited an "army" and was going to attack Agua Prieta most any day. Now people just laughed when that was suggested. It was a case of crying "wolf" too often.

Two years before, old Porfirio Diaz, who had been dictator of Mexico for thirty-four years, resigned and went to Paris with his profits, which were reputed to be enormous. In 1911, Carranza was the recognized president, but he was opposed by numerous partisan leaders, such as Pancho Villa and Zapata. A new "general" with an "army" at his back might spring up almost overnight anywhere in the turbulent republic.

Someone in the crowd around the station shouted: "Here she comes!" Others took up the cry, and people bustled around eagerly.

"Thar she blows!" yelled a wit. In fact, when the train was about a mile from town, the whistle started to blow, and kept it up continuously as the locomotive came puffing up the long grade.

There was a man riding on the cowcatcher. He held a rifle in his hands, and he was shooting it. A soldier fell, coughing blood on the platform. As the train slowed to a stop, the rifleman leaped off the cowcatcher, still shooting at every Federal soldier in sight. He had red hair and freckles.

Hundreds of men came piling out of the two passenger cars, the baggage car, and the ore gondolas. Red Lopez and his army were attacking the garrison city of Agua Prieta.

FEDERAL troops of the garrison, urged on by their officers, came boiling out of the *cuartel* and the barracks to resist the assault. An almost continuous roar of rifle fire surged out of the town, and across the International Line to Douglas, Arizona. Bullets were soon whizzing across to the American side, too.

Men, women and children were running and screaming. Many fell dead or wounded, generally from the heedless fire of the Federals, who were never allowed to waste ammunition on target practice, but had been trained to fire in volleys, like the soldiers of Napoleon and Wellington.

A five-year old boy fell, riddled by bullets. His mother, heedless of the slugs that splattered the dust around her, knelt beside him in the street. She kept moaning, over and over again. "*Mi hijo—mi hijo!*"

A burro stood nearby, switching her tail impatiently at what she apparently thought were the extra large insects buzzing about her. One of the "insects" struck her a mortal blow. In her dying spasm, she reproduced the species, and a wobbly colt nuzzled at her side. Mrs. Alice Gatliff, a Mormon woman who was the proprietor of the Curio Cafe, ran out, picked up the newborn donkey, and carried it to safety in her house. She bottle-fed and raised to maturity the beast she had rescued from the battle line.

As the first heavy volleys of the Federals crashed down the streets, Lopez' army took shelter on the side of the railroad embankment away from the main part of town. Two Mexicans in the outfit threw down their guns, and started running to safety on the American side. Angered by their attempted desertion, Red Lopez cracked down, and shot them both dead before they could get away.

The attackers, most of whom were Americans and Yaquis accustomed to

big game hunting, went to work with their .30-.30's and .30-.40's as coolly as if they had been shooting deer, and the Federal soldiers began to fall so fast that those who were left retreated, and barricaded themselves in the *cuartel* and the bull ring—both heavy adobe structures with walls a foot thick, which would stop any rifle bullet.

The *cuartel,* however, proved to be a trap. It had only one door through which the bullets of Lopez' men were soon sweeping its interior. The defenders wanted to get out and join their comrades in the bull ring, but there was no escape until the Mayor of Agua Prieta, Jesus Garcia Peña, hit upon an unusual tactical device, which consisted of blowing himself and his followers out of their own fortress. He dynamited a large hole in the rear of the *cuartel,* and through it he and his men escaped to join the other Federals in the bull ring.

Then Red Lopez proceeded to take advantage of one of the most successful strategies of Border warfare. He mustered his men between the Federal stronghold and the United States, so that Federal bullets came onto American territory, while those of his own men merely went on down into Mexico.

A squadron of U.S. Cavalry stationed at Douglas under the command of Captain Julian E. Gaujot had been summoned to patrol the Line, and protect American territory. Civilians appealed to Captain Gaujot to make the bullets stop, but he had no authority to order his men to invade Mexican territory.

Lopez continued to press the attack on the remaining Federal soldiers inside the bull ring. His men suffered more casualties from government sympathizers who sniped at them from the flat roofs of the one and two story adobe houses, than they did from the soldiers themselves.

One of Lopez' followers, an American boy named Edwards, from Roanoke, Virginia, was shot by a sniper in a white shirt. Red saw him fall, ran to him, and raised his head and rested it on his knee. He saw the young fellow was dying, and asked: "Is there anything I can do for you, boy?"

"Yes, there is," replied Edwards, weakly. "You see that son in white over there on that roof? I wish you'd get him. He's the one that got me."

One of Lopez' Yaqui sharpshooters knelt, took careful aim, and fired. The sniper collapsed into a heap on the roof, where his body lay until next day.

Lopez was fond of Edwards, who had been with him for some time. He said to the dying boy, who was only nineteen years old: "Edwards, I don't think you'll be here long. Isn't there anything else you want?" Tears were streaming down the terrible Lopez' face!

One of the other Americans who was standing by added: "You might die, you know. Wouldn't you like to pass out in the U.S.A.?"

"Yes," Edwards told him, his voice weaker. "I guess I would like to die in my own country. But, Red, I helped you take the town, didn't I?"

"You sure did, boy," Lopez told him.

They carried Edwards to the International Line. As they reached the end of the main street of Douglas, American

NO FINER DRINK EAST OR WEST OF THE ROCKIES!
BETTER TASTE...
PEPSI-COLA
...BIGGER DRINK
Purity...in the big big bottle — that's Pepsi-Cola!

soldiers stopped them. A sergeant said: "Halt! You Mex can't come over here with your guns."

Lopez answered: "We don't want over there. This boy is just as American as you are, and he's dying. He wants to check out in his own country, that's all."

They put Edwards down just inside American territory, and Lopez and another American held each of his hands until he died a few minutes later.

Shortly afterward, Captain Gaujot, carrying an American flag, and an unnamed civilian crossed the line to the bull ring, and persuaded the Federal officers to surrender, since it was their bullets which were coming onto American territory.

Captain Gaujot received the Congressional Medal of Honor for this. The name of the civilian is not recorded, even in the Douglas newspapers of the following day.

SURPRISINGLY, Captain Lopez showed soldierly qualities besides those expected of him. It surprised nobody for him to be the reckless leader of a desperate attack, but his behavior after the Federal garrison surrendered was exemplary.

After allowing the soldiers to march across to the American side unharmed, without, of course, their arms and ammunition, Red went to work to administer the town he had captured. He put a stop to the looting of shops and other property of government sympathizers who had fled, posted guards and sentries, and organized the city of Agua Prieta for defense.

Men flocked to his banner. He'd attacked Agua Prieta with about two hundred and fifty men. As soon as he had taken the town, recruits rushed to join him, including many more Americans, and before long he had over a thousand. Red was such a popular and magnetic character that men were glad to follow him anywhere. In the end, it was that very popularity which caused his death.

The titular commander of the expedition which captured Agua Prieta was not Captain Lopez at all, but a certain Colonel Medina, a political rather than a fighting officer. Nobody saw Medina during the battle, but as soon as the fighting was over, he appeared and took command.

He and Lopez had various disagreements over matters of policy. For example, Red objected strongly to Medina's ordering great quantities of beer, wine and liquor poured out into the street. Lopez claimed that it was a criminal waste and destruction of valuable property, and that he could control his men and keep them sober enough for all intents and purposes even with liquor at hand. Medina was despised and disliked, and he was bitterly jealous of Lopez' popularity and flair for leadership.

The publicity given to the Battle of Agua Prieta all over the world, and the strong protests of the United States Government about violation of American territory spurred the Carranza Government of Mexico to action, and Lopez' tenure of the town was very short.

Agua Prieta was taken on a Thursday. On the following Sunday, an immense cloud of yellow dust could be seen over Anavacagi Pass, in the nearby mountains. Through this pass, and across the desert came a large Federal Army, said to have numbered more than 15,000 men.

In the town, Lopez was everywhere. He had trenches dug all around the city, and the roofs of the one-story adobe houses fortified to give protection to his sharpshooters. He encouraged his men, telling them that the Federals could never beat them as long as they didn't quit, and he reminded them about how he had shot down the two deserters the day before.

The Federal troops neared the town, deployed, and set up a terrific rifle fire, but since most of them shot into the air aiming from the hip, casualties among the defenders were light. Lopez' American and Yaqui hunters took a tremendous toll from the assailants. The Federals tried to set up machine guns, but as fast as they did, Lopez' marksmen shot down the gunners.

Red was absolutely impervious to fear. As he rode along the trench line encouraging his men, inside of half a

minute one bullet nicked the neck of his horse, another took the heel off one of his boots, and a third knocked his six-shooter out of its holster. Red leaned out of his saddle, picked it up, reholstered it, and rode on as if nothing had happened.

But the number of Federals appeared to be inexhaustible. At last some of the Americans shot away all the ammunition they had for their deer guns, and retired across the Line to the United States as casually as men returning from a hunting party. Their defection disheartened many of the Mexicans, who followed their example. Soon there was a rout, and all the rebels who could travel threw down their arms and crossed to the American side. There was nothing Red could do but follow them.

HE WENT to El Paso, crossed the Line into Mexico near there, and joined the Maderistas who were attacking Juarez. When that job was done, there was no more fighting in sight, so he returned to Douglas and went on a prolonged spree.

In the meantime, the Federal Army had evacuated Agua Prieta and gone to fight rebels elsewhere, and Lopez' former enemy, Colonel Medina, had again taken command of the town by default. Lopez' Americans and Yaquis refused to serve with him, and he had only Mexicans under his command. As soon as he heard that Red was in Douglas, he sent word for him to come to Agua Prieta and join his forces.

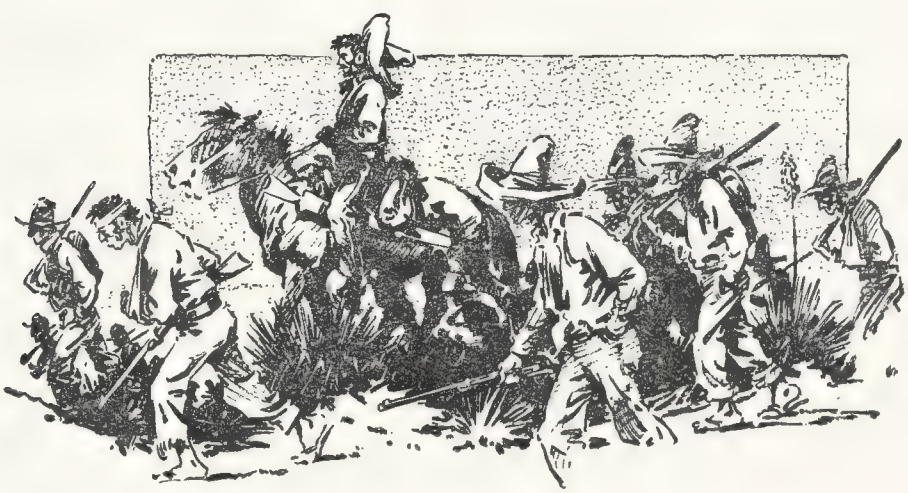
Red's American friends warned him not to go, that Medina was "laying for him." For several days Red hesitated, but he finally disregarded his friends' advice, and listened to Medina's blandishments. It was a fatal mistake.

No sooner had he stepped across the Line, than he was surrounded by a squad of soldiers with fixed bayonets, and thrown into the *cuartel* on charges which have never been published to this day.

For two weeks he remained there under heavy guard. No one was allowed to see him except his old friend, Mrs. Gatliff of the suckling donkey, who brought him a good meal every day.

One night he was ordered transferred to the big prison near Mazatlan in the interior of Mexico. On the way, he got off the horse he was riding to quench his thirst at a little stream. As he knelt to drink, someone unknown shot him through the back of the head, under *el ley de fuga*—he was reported "shot while trying to escape."

So ended the career of one of the most picturesque characters the Border has ever known.



ILLUSTRATED BY HAMILTON GREENE

MORE *than the* FLESH

By WILLIAM ASHLEY ANDERSON

WHEN you come ashore at the Abkari landing in Aden, if you are well informed you'll turn right and drift into the Union Club which is today as nearly a cross-roads of the Empire as any place can well be. Sooner or later every arm of the service of empire rests an elbow on the bar to steady a Johnny Collins or a burra peg of Scotch with its rapidly dissolving ice. Within three minutes any war correspondent who is fortunate enough to come up from the Indian Ocean with the salty dankness of the monsoon still on

He saw seven Danakil tribesmen rising from the rocks below him.

his collar, or down from Egypt and the holy lands blistered by sand of the khamsin, feels the hackles rise upon his neck—for here he is behind the scenes, and all the actors are talking freely. Here are the stories that don't get into despatches. Here are the men whose names you never hear but whose unrecorded deeds have turned the trick or saved the day when all seemed lost.

You've all read of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia which started this whole bloody mess. You were probably dismayed with the rest of us at the way the Italians later chased the British out of Somaliland. And let's hope you were proportionately delighted when the British came back again and not only recaptured British Somaliland, Eritrea and the whole empire of Ethiopia—more territory than the Germans have got to date or are likely to get—but also Italian Somaliland. You've read all this in despatches—volumes of them. But you never read about the part Ravenscroft played, and Bunji, the glibbering little Kavirondo who helped see him through when the going was bad. If you're ever in Aden you may meet Ravenscroft at the bar, blandly downing his tenth with shaking hand—but not shaking from drink. He has a legitimate right to drown an endless thirst. Here's how he acquired that thirst—and contributed to the lore of those who went before in order to make ultimate victory possible.

RAVENSCROFT was one of the veterans of the King's African Rifles, crocked by too much old-fashioned campaigning in German East when an army moved on boots and all transport went forward on the sandaled feet of porters. But he was a first-class Intelligence man, and Ethiopia was his meat. That's why Italy's entrance into the war found him out on a limb on the eastward escarpment of Ethiopia, trying to imagine in a wilderness what bombers might someday do to hypothetical airplane bases in the highlands. The day came when Ravenscroft had all the information but he was stymied, literally, between the devil and the deep Red Sea. So there he sat looking eastward, brooding.

He made no attempt to rationalize the impulse that had induced him to take

Bunji with him that day; but he knew his hunch had been right when at high noon the withered old witch-doctor stirred from his heat-trance and sighed.

"Strangers in camps!"

The big Englishman rubbed both hands over his red sweating face and through the long greying hair still streaked with the golden glint of youth. The blue eyes he turned on the witch-doctor never failed to agitate the old fraud. Bunji's lustreless eyes in his incredibly wrinkled face blinked rapidly. He folded his skinny arms like an old dog baboon and nervously scratched grey lines in his leathery skin. His long lip grew longer and he grinned placatingly, disclosing yellow snaggled teeth.

"Always seeing trouble!" growled Ravenscroft, but he no more doubted the information that had come to Bunji out of the heavy static than if he had read the message on ticker-tape. The sensitiveness of Bunji's perceptions was simply keener than his. It was no more remarkable than Ravenscroft's own ability to prognosticate phases of the moon on the dial of his grandfather's Swiss watch, looped by a lanyard to his belt. Nor at this moment did it seem incongruous to the Intelligence officer that the only man upon whom he could depend was this old nigger, soaked in sorcery.

The rumor of Italy's declaration of war against France and Britain had already reached them even at this remote edge of the Ethiopian Plateau. That meant only a matter of time before an Italian patrol would jump his camp and learn he had been plotting the locations of every possible airfield along the eastern fringe of Ethiopia from which Italian bombers could fly across the arid Danakil Desert, and across the Red Sea, to drop bombs on the British port and fortress of Aden in Arabia, which guards the southern approaches of the Suez Canal and the sea route to India and the Far East. How vital this information might be Ravenscroft knew well, with the picture of Dunkirk fresh in mind.

Lighting a cigarette with hands that had a chronic tremor, he leaned back in the shadow of the rock and stared moodily down into the heat haze that simmered over the land of the Danakils. He knew he had no choice. He would have to get his information to Jibuti, the port of French Somaliland, on the African side, across the way from Aden.

The route across the Ethiopian highlands was impossible. Every mile of his safari had been under covert surveillance. Though the suspicious Italians had dared no overt act until they knew whether Britain was to be an ally or a foe, now that Mussolini had moved there would be no risky attempt at capture. Not of Ravenscroft! They would shoot him from ambush or in the open on the run. Ravenscroft thought of this only incidentally, as a Manchester merchant might weigh the risks of a shipment of kanzas to Zanzibar. It was all part of the bloody business. No risk, no gain—and nothing to do but get on with it.

He flipped his cigarette into the pebbles. Bunji pounced on it, held it with distended fingers to his puckered lips, sucked the smoke deep into his lungs with eyes closed in ecstasy.

"Ruddy ape!" snorted Ravenscroft. "And I've got to count on you!"

"Yes, yes, yes!" Bunji coughed and sputtered.

RAVENSCROFT considered the leathery old bag of bones wrapped in rags of leopard skins. These and the loose sandals that protected his splay-toed feet from gravel and scorpions were the only things that distinguished him from a wild animal, except, of course, the grimy little *bouda* bag that hung by a cord of woven hyena hair from his tortoise neck. The *bouda* bag contained the tools of his witchcraft—nonsensical scraps that gave him power over the little devils in all the things that plague mankind. No, Bunji was not a wild animal. He was a spiritual complexity encased in withered flesh, a spidery organism whose nervous feelers reached out like a protective aura, incrediby sensitive to living impulses. His kinship to the things of the bush had been useful to Ravenscroft who accepted it naturally as an understandable and useful fact.

Could he not himself smell birds and snakes and distant habitations, reacting sometimes unconsciously to their presence? Did he not instinctively awake in the dark to unseen menaces? These were things the atrophied or jangled nerves of civilized man cannot feel.

He knew that Bunji could certainly cross the plateau without discovery, but Bunji could not cross the Danakil. That required physical and moral strength beyond the African's capacity. Ravenscroft frowned at his own trembling hand, annoyed at his own limitations. Lifting his chin he drew a long uneven breath as he pressed his hand in an unconscious gesture across his bared chest.

In order to understand the hell Ravenscroft faced place your clenched fist a few inches from the outer edge of the table. Your fingers and knuckles are the buttresses of the Ethiopian Plateau that rises five thousand feet above the Danakil Depression, lying like a hot seared wound between the plateau and the ragged western shore of the Red Sea. The plateau is the pleasant, well-watered and productive mountainous territory of Ethiopia; but the Danakil Depression, much of it below sea level, is the most forbidding gash upon the earth's surface, spotted with the dry pustules of dead and dormant volcanoes, crusted with honeycomb lava, black knife-edged basalt splashed with iridescent manganese and red and yellow ochre, and scaled with vast flat stretches of sun-baked white clay and powdery sodium.

Much of this is dead as the moon. Incredible heat rolls over it, pressing down like a cauterizing iron. Where subterranean waterholes ooze through the broken cliffs, mesozoic life appears in the form of white scorpions, giant tortoises and serpents that feed on sun-blinded desert quail. There are human beings who live in that desert, live in temperatures of sixty degrees above blood heat. They are the demons of the hell—thin, bronze-colored, with black mops of hair. They have one dominating purpose in their precarious lives; namely, to hunt their fellow man and adorn their spears and bodies and bleak tombs with the trophies of their victims.

Across this glaring region, like a wavy black line upon a piece of paper, flows the muddy Awash River from a gorge in the plateau to the Oasis of Aussa.

Ravenscroft looked out in the direction of Aussa, thinking of the desert as a map, plotting a course across it.

"Look here, Bunji," he said. "There is no escape for me across the plateau. So I go down across the Danakil." Bunji opened his mouth wide, pursed his lips and let out a low incredulous whistle. "But," continued Ravenscroft, "you go southward to where the railroad to Jibuti crosses the gorge of the Awash River. Then you must follow the railroad to Jibuti."

He took a sheet from his field book and wrote names and information on the air bases he had scouted from Sakota to Dessie. He stared at Bunji. How the devil would the old man carry it? Normally, he would carry a message in the split end of a long walking staff, waving it like a flag for all to see! He might cram the despatch in the *bouda* bag but it would soon become an undecipherable mess among Bunji's treasured bugs and beetles. With a look of mingled resignation and disgust at the grimacing witch-doctor, Ravenscroft reluctantly loosened his Swiss watch and folded the message inside the gold case. That would both authenticate and protect the report.

"Hand this," he said, "to the Englishman in the house where the English flag flies in Jibuti."

Bunji's claw-like hand darted out and seized the watch.

"*Mane . . . mane . . . mane!*"

"Oh, it's good!" snorted Ravenscroft resentfully. "Well, you're making a farce of this bloody show, that's what you're doing! Look here," he added in Swahili, "only Englishmen must see this! If Ethiopians see, if Italians see, if Arabs see—surely you will die!"

Bunji contorted his face and spit out the thought. "No die. Death—he gone!"

This was the tie that held the two together.

RAVENSCROFT had first discovered Bunji abandoned by a group of Italian and Ethiopian road-makers. An old slave from the Equatorial Provinces,

Bunji went into violent tantrums. He jumped up and down.

he had recognized an Englishman and beseeched his help in Swahili. His left shoulder and back were swollen taut as a mango and he was in agony. Punctures and all his witchcraft had failed to release any pus.

Diagnosing the ailment as gas gangrene, Ravenscroft had taken the moaning creature to his tent and slashed him with a razor from shoulder to waist. Eventually the pus oozed out and Bunji survived, the physical and spiritual slave of the Englishman whose master magic had opened him like a bag to let the spirit of death escape! Still, Bunji was Kavirondo born, Ravenscroft reflected, and no Kavirondo would overlook a chance like this.

"You old devil-dodger," he said, "you'll not dodge me! I have given you my *bouda*. Now you give me your *bouda* as a token!"

Bunji recoiled on his haunches as if struck, chattering with horror, grasping the *bouda* bag at his neck with his free hand. That bag of tricks was infinitely more to him than a mere symbol. It was his means of communion with the little devils in things. It was his power over darkness. That dirty little bag held the souls of his wild friends and he clung to it with beseeching desperation.

Incongruous racial indignation and family pride exploded in the Englishman. His husky voice rose to a smothered roar: "Come on! Come on, you Little Thing! You Little-Thing-Without-Teeth-To-Gnaw-A-Tail! You dare match your *bouda* against my *bouda*? Why, my ancestors brought my *bouda* down from the snow-topped mountains! For generations it has shown the moon the way across the darkness! And what virtue is there in your *bouda*? Bugs! Little bugs and feathers that couldn't keep death from crawling into your own armpit!"

Bunji whimpered, squirming, looking at Ravenscroft's red-white-and-blue face with fascination. With a spasmodic gesture he jerked the dirty little bag from his neck and handed it over with violently trembling hand. Ravenscroft felt only momentary compunction as he slipped the cord around his neck; but when the coarse hair rubbed against his sweating skin he shivered as if a snake had touched him. Every disease in Africa must have come in contact with that *bouda* bag. With what unholy benedictions it must have touched the bellies of women and the war-bonnets of warriors! Ah, well! Ravenscroft stood up reluctantly with hand pressing upon his chest. Damn that shaking hand! Damn that swollen heart!

Ravenscroft looked down into the soupy atmosphere with humid spirals floating up like steam above a pot and he had no illusions. The sun was declining and pursuers would soon be on his spoor. There was no thought of courage in his going. It was simply the thing to do, and his nature knew no choice but to run the game to the end.

Well accoutered with safari tunic and

slacks tucked into heavy ammunition boots, he carried water-bottle, matches, odds and ends, and a sporting rifle with five extra clips in his pockets. He took a cigarette from a pack and tossed the remainder to Bunji, as he stood up reluctantly.

"*Kwa heri!*" said Bunji in plaintive farewell.

"So long," said Ravenscroft, adding grimly: "You'll be getting your *bouda* when, as and if we meet in Jibuti!"

"*Ai-yee!*" squealed Bunji. He did not move as his eyes followed the master's dusty brown figure sliding and bouncing down the long slope until it vanished in waves of heat and dust. Only then, as if the enormity of his loss had just burst upon him, Bunji went into violent tantrums. He jumped up and down stamping with head tilted back and arms wrapped tight about his body. He fell down and beat the ground with hands and feet. He rolled over and over, kicking and squealing. Finally he lay quiet, staring out from under his crooked arm, out with unseeing eyes across the desert where Ravenscroft was starting his oblique march to the steaming sea.

All at once a faint electric vibration passed through Bunji. He had become aware of the faint ticking of the watch against his body. A living impulse was there! The Englishman's *bouda* was talking to him! In sudden exaltation Bunji wondered if his *bouda* would speak as clearly to the white man. Bunji's entrancement was interrupted by a noise from above. With the sharp coughing bark of a sentinel baboon he faded slowly and reluctantly among the rocks.

RAVENSCROFT knew it was most unlikely that he himself would ever arrive in Jibuti but he didn't stop to think of that. His method was to fix an objective and keep going until stopped. What he felt was that if any white man in Africa could make that trek, it was he. He continued the downward scramble with outstretched arms.

No lone man had ever crossed the Danakil; yet strangely enough he felt no loneliness—rather a sort of stimulating excitement—and a feeling of companionship with Bunji whose *bouda* bounced upon his chest.

What you have learned of the Danakil presents the worst side of the story. Ravenscroft, who knew all the facts and could read the desert as if it were a map, saw a more hopeful prospect. He had reports of the Italians pushing a roadway southward from old Eritrea to carry supplies for the attack he foresaw on French and British Somaliland, and to strengthen their control over the Antari of the Oasis of Aussa. This road might save him suffering but it would get him shot in the end. Instinctively recoiling from the desert, he felt his best bet was to keep close to the base of the highland escarpment, striking out into the desert only to circle patrols that would be sent down from the plateau to cut him off. If he could time his break across the desert so that he could reach the Oasis of Aussa without being cut down, he might lie doggo in the river jungle of the Awash and there refresh himself before undertaking the final leg through the rock and thorn-bush of the Galalu Plain that stretches away in wild confusion to the narrow gauge railroad from Addis Ababa to the sea. Once on the French right-of-way he might have a chance.

Twenty years ago he would have faced the march defiantly, matching his strength and wits against anyone or anything in Africa. Now his body was only a vehicle with a crocked engine. One thing he could count on. His legs would carry him with the automatic tirelessness of a migrating animal, if only he were not called upon for sudden violent action.

The sharp downward slope made his accouterments seem light. Though he was soaked in sweat, his breath came easily.

By nightfall, with the escarpment towering like a city above him, he had got something of the feel of the country. The sun slipped behind the mountains as if a giant door had slowly closed plunging the white-hot plains into sudden darkness—a hot dank darkness that made a man struggle for breath. The first darkness was intense but a monster moon of mother-of-pearl soon rose out

of Arabia and the silent grotesque world was flooded with a brilliance that made light and shadow as sharp as the striping of a Grévy's zebra. Bathed in moonlight, the escarpment now seemed like a high bank of luminous clouds. It was not difficult for Ravenscroft to keep direction among the dried-up, boulder-strewn watercourses and faint ancient trails that paralleled the base of the mountain wall.

There was life about him in the scurryings of marmots and ground squirrels underfoot; in the occasional appearance of flat-topped mimosas and the uplifted hands of giant euphorbias; the thin wisps of odors that told of the passing of unseen forms; and once a wave of overpowering sweetness that was the fragrance of a desert plant appealing to the bees. This was easy; but he knew it was only a breather, for even here not once through the night did he smell water.

AS the red fury of dawn slashed out across the desert, soon the blast of heat drove Ravenscroft to shelter among some rocks where he rested, drinking his precious water in miserly sips. Utterly relaxed but with mind and senses alert, he had learned by three of the afternoon that no one was following his trail, though there were domestic goats and a human habitation not far away. Before sunset he discovered an Ethiopian *tokhul* up a narrow chasm where a fugitive from the plateau led a precarious life. When the native's terror abated and he recognized a friend, he overwhelmed the Englishman with the hospitality of his loneliness, begging him to remain in hiding with him. He pointed out that not even the salt caravans from Assab that passed through the Oasis of Aussa, passed in safety.

"They come out of the desert like madmen," said the hillman, "those that come out at all."

"There's a trail then?"

The Ethiopian sighed and described the bearings of the salt trail that led from the plateau to the big bend of the Awash River, beyond which was the Oasis of Aussa.

"Italians are there," he said.

"Holy Jo!" said Ravenscroft.

"Well, if you must leave the trail, bear to the right. In time you will reach the Awash. If it's in spate from rain on the plateau, I don't see how you can cross it."

"I shan't complain of water."

"You may—for even when it falls from the sky, it falls as mud. The dust of the khamsin soaks it up as it falls."

Provisioned with a lump of goat cheese, some tough sheets of peppery bread, a gourd of curdled milk and fresh water, Ravenscroft made tracks that night, holing up again in the heat to conserve his strength and body moisture.

He was not yet lonely and he found sardonic amusement in thinking of Bunji on the plateau above, skipping along like a limping raven, fretting for the precious *bouda* bag that hung on Ravenscroft's chest. There was a sensory impression of aliveness in that touch of soft pliable skin as if Bunji's hand were actually on the halter of hyena hair. But that night it appeared that the guiding hand was none too dependable.

It had been tough going for Ravenscroft—feeling his way out obliquely into the desert—feeling his way through a debris of black, knife-edged rocks that clinked metallically underfoot, walking down timeless corridors walled with black basalt and floored with colored marbles, eventually emerging upon a flat floor of white clay with a light covering of sand that hissed under his boots like snakes in the oppressive silence. This led in turn to a group of low hills touched with opalescence in the moonlight. At length he found himself on a recognizable trail. It was just before dawn. Energy was at its lowest ebb but darkness was precious and he continued on. Half asleep as he slogged along with weary head drooping on his chest, he walked straight into an Ethiopian patrol which was planted across the trail to intercept him.

His first dash was a wild spasmodic rush to escape. He ran with bullets about his ears. There was no place to make a getaway. They were too quick for him. He bolted with a tremendous burst of speed but by the time he got

into the clear his lungs were bursting, his heart pounding painfully, his legs crumpling under him. With the Ethiopians and a shouting Italian at his heels and the light of dawn now brightening about them, Ravenscroft had neither chance to hide nor time to unsling his rifle. He stumbled towards the black shadow of a wadi that lay like a gash on the white plain.

Here he turned, cursing, wrestling frantically to unsling his rifle while the shouting Italian and his askaris leaped to seize him before he could defend himself. In that instant Ravenscroft had the curious impression that a dark wall rose up before them flinging them back on their heels. This was only an impression, for all the rest was confusion.

The ground dissolved beneath him. He fell into soft, black-cushioned darkness. An acrid sweetness was in his nostrils and there was a vibrant hum like the singing roar of sand before a hot wind—but this vibration was a living thing like the sweeping chords of an impassioned symphony. With earth falling down on him in an avalanche of cork-like fragments, he rolled frantically. Hunched in a ball, he rolled until he brought up against a rock. With face buried in the crook of his arm and his topi protecting his head, he prayed God the earth would bury him—but not too deep—for the living clouds of bees that sucked the sweetness of desert acacia and mimosa meant death to all who walked into their ancient lair.

ALL day long Ravenscroft lay there, immovable as a dead man except for the pounding of his heart that slowly, painfully settled to a normal rhythm as time passed. The depth of the wadi and the blanket of earth saved him from the worst of the heat. A hundred red-hot needles were in his hide but the coating of friable earth protected him from the death that roared and hummed in explosive clouds above him. He lay there, tortured beyond belief by heat and thirst and the agony of inaction, until dark. Then he thrust forth his hand and nothing assailed it. So he rose to his feet and passed quickly across the wadi and out again upon the plain.

Once in the clear, he did a characteristic thing. Instead of hurrying along the trail, he scouted back upon the encampment of the patrol. The bivouac was still complete, as if life had suddenly been suspended—but life was no longer there.

"They ran straight into that barrage!" he muttered.

By the aid of a lantern he found what he wanted—a gourd full of tedj, the flat sour honeymead of the Ethiopians, and several packs of cigarettes. He drank the beer in long gasping draughts, feeling his belly swell with it, feeling it spill down his chin and run in rivulets over neck and chest. He wrapped a piece of cotton sheeting round his head and body. Then, lighting a cigarette, he walked steadily on his way, curiously elated, certain now that no patrol would intercept him or overtake him without a delaying brush with that rear-guard of bees lying in ambush in the wadi.

This day he walked in daylight and soon dread of the desert rose like nausea within him. The boulder-strewn ravines and basalt cliffs here were calcined into dust by the merciless heat. The blistered white soil was delicately crusted, and crumbled into powder underfoot. He could see no limit to the dead plain, he could hear no sound but the hiss of his own feet and the slow thump of blood in his ears. The heat seemed to have him by the throat. Only constant sucking of a moistened rag kept the gluey mucous from sticking when he gulped. When the moon rose that night he continued on, the heat like a hairy cloak upon him, for in the Danakil night brings no coolness; the porous surface pours out imprisoned heat. When daylight came, still he continued on. The silence of death was on him and there was no hope for life until he reached the Awash River somewhere ahead in the blinding whiteness. He had difficulty now keeping direction. The light of the sun was diffused in a terrible glare. He seemed to be walking endlessly on one spot. His strained vision became clouded with strings and moving rods and circles as if he were looking through a microscope. Still he moved on.

Ravenscroft was nearing death from thirst as another dawn ran like crimson bush fire under the sulphurous pall of night. The sudden light of day struck vibrations on the flat land. Ravenscroft's heart now felt the flutter of terror for his rheumy eyes gazed on nothing but boundless aridity. Then, far out on the plain, he saw an ant-like line of wild asses. This was life. Lifting his gaze with a flicker of hope he saw in low silhouette the two dead mountain cones that stand bleakly in the middle of the desert north of Aussa. If these truly were Kulsu Kuma, then somewhere to the southward, off to his right—And there it was! A faint grey-green line like vertical chalk marks on a drawing board, a fringe of dusty tamarisk along the Awash!

Instinctively Ravenscroft dropped. With water comes the violent dangers of steel and fang. He stuck it out until the heat of high noon when all Africa sleeps; then he walked in a coma until he reached the tangled bush by the river's edge. Here he found a way through a matted meadow and slid down the long clay bank to the water. Unmindful of crocodile or lurking Danakil he floundered in and soaked up the life-giving waters. Afterwards, aware of the imminence of danger, he found shelter in the crotch of a large tree where he dozed through the day intending to come out after nightfall; but with the going down of the sun he was shocked into alertness by the most terrific jungle uproar he had ever heard. It was as if all the creatures of a vast area had followed the receding waters of a flood and were fighting for survival at the last water-hole. The jungle shook with the rush of shrieking monkeys to escape snake and leopard. Crocodiles splashed and bellowed in the water beneath him. He could feel the vibration of the hyena's gibberish bark; the shrill bedlam of toads and insects, of startled birds and darting animals.

When the quartering moon rose in the first hush of the Hour of the Dog, he slipped from his perch, aching in every joint, and made his way out into the peace of the desert, where, spread upon a boulder, he was reasonably safe until dawn.

RAVENSCROFT continued in this place for two days until strength was restored, not daring to fire a shot nor light a fire. At any hour a savage might discover his spoor and track him down. He knew that the settled part of the oasis, lower down, was pastoral country and partially cultivated. He could forage there more safely than he could stalk game, without shooting in that murderous belt of jungle. That evening while speculating on how far he must go to reach a village, he heard the Antari's trumpets, sweet, high-pitched—a poignant reminder that where there were men there were mounted warriors armed with lance and rifle to ride him down. Ravenscroft's first thought was that he might steal a horse!

Taking his position from the stars, he left the river course and made a wide sweep that brought him, well past midnight as the waning moon was rising, to scattered huts and high thorn-fenced zarebas protecting horses and cattle. Luck was with him, and he found a gourd of mealies by a hut. Emboldened by this he drifted like a shadow among the huts, feeling a curious calm detachment as if a clear simple plan had been laid before him. Emptying the grain into his pockets, he approached a zareba and without too much difficulty tore a gap through which he reached the cattle. He found no horses; but he calmed the doubts of a sleek humped cow that would have graced a temple in Benares and managed to fill the gourd with milk. This was too easy! The smell of the wild was on him—the smell of bees, the jungle, his own strange odor and that of the unclean *bouda* bag with its string of hyena hair—yet the cow stood docilely as he milked her!

Now there was a change. Prickles of fear ran up his spine. Like a thing of the wild he turned in unthinking panic and dived through the hole he had made. He was rattled, frightened. A fire stirred into life as a herdsman woke. Ravenscroft pressed his hand to his straining heart. The *bouda* bag was gone!

Every taut nerve urged him to bolt for the bush. Yet he stood there. After

all, that *bouda* bag was precious to Bunji—and he had staked his British honor on returning it if possible. With the village awakening about him, Ravenscroft turned back to the zareba, searching frantically in the dim light until, hanging there like a fig on a thorn, he found it.

Then he bolted, the gourd of milk in one hand, the *bouda* bag in the other, his rifle thumping between his shoulder-blades, the cotton sheeting streaming behind him like a comet's tail.

He got away without discovery but he had left spoor. With daylight they would be tracking him. It came to him now that they would run him down on camels or horses, and he was of a mind to turn back and fight for a horse and make a dash southward into the Galalu Plain which he still had to cross in order to reach the railway. But this was gambling too much on one throw. There was a possibility of eluding pursuit by heading upstream, following the left bank, since this would be the route they would be least likely to expect him to take. Even a breath of air obscured tracks in the dust and he might get away through the glare of the day.

The line of the river, marked by violet and grey strokes of trees against the desert whiteness, was spotted with wider patches of dusty green that were the tangled jungle. Between these isolated patches were open stretches where nothing but a few tamarisks grew. Once in the tangled jungles he might just as well be suffocated in a haircloth sack. The smaller patches afforded temporary shelter but there he could easily be surrounded and starved out. Still his only hope was to keep near water until the last possible moment when he must make his break southward.

So he moved like a sluggish dust-devil, with the dirty cotton sheeting streaming from head and shoulder, from shelter to shelter. Physical and spiritual depression crushed him. His senses became dull. He grew careless. In order to make better time he took a straight line across a bend of the river as sunset closed down like the lid of a box. When well out in the open he was discovered by a band of horsemen.

THE sight of palpable life, of human enemies, revived Ravenscroft. He took his time unslinging his rifle, opening the breech to blow out dust, shooting the bolt back with a reassuring snap. He had time to observe the horsemen with the same detachment with which he had watched the file of wild asses on the plain. These men of Aussa, mounted on light nervous horses, were not the Danakil devils of the wastelands though just as deadly in intent. The bells and strips of leather and red cloth that caparisoned the crude Arabic saddles and bridles were trophies of the slain. They rode like American Indians, shouting and making fantasia with their horses, then turning suddenly to swoop down on Ravenscroft where he stood like an ant-hill on the flat plain now rapidly sinking into the dusk of evening. There was a flicker of orange light and a sharp ringing crash from Ravenscroft's rifle. The leading horse somersaulted in a cloud of white dust. That stopped the first charge.

Ravenscroft turned and loped for the river, not extending himself, running with face over his shoulder, feeling the hackles rise on his neck at the crackling of the Aussan guns, at the yells and shouts that brought a hush to the jungle life.

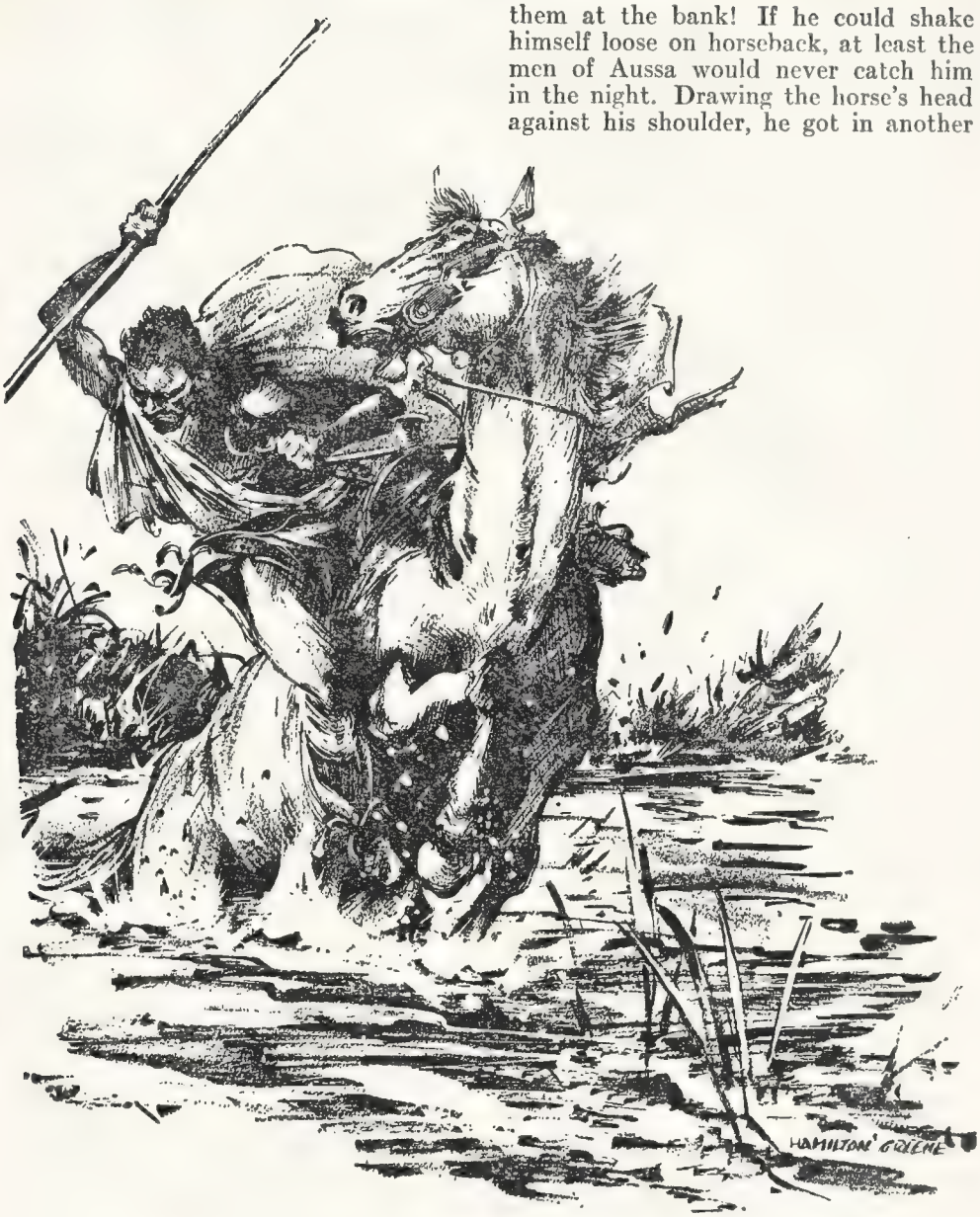
He halted twice more to fire, the bright dots of his rifle flashes bringing the horses plunging back on their haunches as another ploughed its neck in the dust.

Sudden darkness was now rising in a mist about them. The waning moon would not show until late but even so Ravenscroft knew that with the horsemen converging in on him he was pinned against the river like a fox before rushing hounds. Once in the water they could ride him under, drowning him or stabbing him with their spears. If he could hold them at the river's bank he might have a chance to escape another day.

In the dusk, he pumped a clip at them, adding to the din of the fusillade about him. Frenziedly he rammed home a fresh clip and plunged into the stream up to his armpits.

A horseman splashed down on him, yelling and lunging with a spear.

Floundering across, he had gained the edge of the opposite shore when a horseman splashed down on him, yelling and lunging with a spear. Ravenscroft thrust his rifle against the man's body and blasted him from the saddle. In the same instant he flung himself at the horse, seizing the brutal snaffle with his left hand and flinging his right arm over the saddle without relaxing his grip on the rifle. The water, the slippery clay of the sloping bank checked the frantic beast. Ravenscroft was dragged to a firmer footing, his face buried in the horse's neck, curiously aware with a sense almost of gratitude of the friendly



smell of horse sweat, in his nostrils.

As he mastered the trembling horse his first impulse was to scramble on his back and make a blind dash for it through the bush. Oh God, he thought, if I could only hold them back for three minutes! Then, almost as if an order had been shouted to him, he knew he must try to halt them. He must halt them at the bank! If he could shake himself loose on horseback, at least the men of Aussa would never catch him in the night. Drawing the horse's head against his shoulder, he got in another burst of shots at the dark fringe of the opposite shore. Even as he fired he was aware, from the flashes of the Aussan guns, that no more of them had yet entered the water. The loud fusillade continued but they were not actually pushing home the attack. They were checking.

A coolness came over his steaming

body. Instead of plunging and fighting, the horse was standing quietly. In that instant it seemed to Ravenscroft there was an unseen Presence in the bush around him. He had known the feeling in a line of skirmishers at night—the awareness of unseen comrades fighting beside him. Awed and puzzled, he looked about—and saw the darkness of the bush, right and left, punctured with flashes. Amid the uproar of rifle fire from the opposite bank, he could not distinguish the sound of firing near him; but then, he thought with an incredulous gasp, neither can the men of Aussa! How could they tell in the darkness that Bunji and other refugees escaping to the coast were not with him?

Flinging a leg over the horse, Ravenscroft worked his way through the fringe of bush until he reached the open. Taking his direction from a star, he cantered southward, hoofbeats muffled in the sodium underfoot. When at length he drew down to a walk, he was gasping and laughing hysterically:

"Like a bunch of *ruga-rugas!*" he choked. "Shooting at fireflies! I'd never have believed it! Shooting at fireflies! That's one for the book! . . . *Along about the sunset . . . Won't you listen to my story?* . . . Bloomin' fireflies!"

HE pushed southward all night, cantering in the open Indian style without stirrups, for he couldn't put his ragged boots in Arab toe-rings. He drew the horse down to a walk only when it was necessary to thread his way along ground littered with basalt and lava rocks. His wet garments and the horse's plunge in the river kept them reasonably fresh and Ravenscroft rode under the stars with rising spirits. For the first time he dared hope he might actually make it, though the dreadful Galalu Plain still lay between him and the railroad to Jibuti. Dawn came with opalescent light touching the Sibabi Hills to the southwest. Then he saw grim Mt. Ayelu where explorers from the south had been massacred before him; but, then, he reasoned, if they had got that far, approaching from the southward, he might back track along their trail.

Dark clouds hung in the sky through which solid shafts of sunlight revealed black canyons and fantastic cliffs like old wood-cuts in the Bible. He saw zebras and ostriches drifting toward the river depression and recalled the gratitude that he had crossed the Awash before it had swollen with rains from the plateau. He wondered how Bunji would fare in the rains. He wondered if he might beat him to Jibuti after all!

There was no water on the plain. Ravenscroft was terribly tempted to risk turning toward the river. But certainly there were Danakil villages there. Despite all suffering, it was safer on the plain. Once he found some *kart* bushes on which the horse fed ravenously. He, too, chewed the pulpy leaves until almost stupefied from the narcotic weed.

When his horse fell on the third day, Ravenscroft shot him with his last bullet. The rifle was now too heavy to carry. He staggered on, the soles of his boots flapping, his scorched mouth hanging open, his blue eyes glaring bleakly from the smudged blackness of his face. But he moved forward steadily; for Mt. Assabot was now before him—and Mt. Assabot looked down upon the Jibuti railroad.

It was daylight when he stumbled upon the iron rails.

Under normal conditions there were only three trains a week. War and the development of the Italian port of Massawa far to the northward had diverted traffic. Then, too, the Danakils were constantly raiding the line for iron and the precious copper wire of the telegraph. Ravenscroft saw now that the wires were down. What had happened to the railroad while he was in the wilderness?

There was nothing he could do but turn eastward in the hope he might find some isolated station by a water-tank. He told himself that with the wires down a maintenance crew must be on its way by train.

The heat came on like the roll of a drum.

By ten o'clock the world looked like the face of a brazen planet. There was no sign of vegetation here. Volcanic rock, flaming red and yellow, boiled up

in a dead sea of lava dust. Again the heat was a physical force pressing down on him, sucking at his withered body, gripping his heart. The crushed and ragged helmet drooped upon his head; his rusty beard spread down upon his chest; and chest and stomach were bare to the waist, wet and pallid. His garments hung in tatters. Out of the dirty shadow of his face, eyes looked like white lights. The *bouda* bag, hanging like an amulet upon his sunken ribs, gave the final touch of authenticity to this wild mullah who had come out of the desert.

He shot the horse with his last bullet.

As minutes passed into hours and nothing appeared, Ravenscroft walked on in a daze. All at once he came to a halt. There was emptiness before him. The rails had ended. After a moment he raised his eyes and saw that the trestle that had spanned a deep dry wadi had disappeared. Along the bottom of the ravine, crushed and scattered like the desiccated segments of a snake in the sun, were the remains of the up-country goods train — stark, silent, stripped clean as bones where vultures and hyenas have feasted.

Ravenscroft looked down with strange detachment. The utter absence of life or movement of any kind made the picture unreal. There was no informing sound. There was no smell, either of life or death. The box cars were so many empty paste-board cartons; the locomotive an empty oil-drum. The boxes that once held merchandise and the broken crates that had been alive and clamorous with livestock and barnyard fowl were but a dusty litter. It was hopeless to look here for life, and no one could have escaped into the hills. In the moving waves of heat there was not even a perch on a hilltop where a winged bird might light.

But within the iron of the locomotive there was water!

WITH life restored by the hot and rusty liquid, Ravenscroft's thoughts began again to run clearly. Turning away from the wreck to escape the silent horror, he climbed a low hill from which he

might look for signs of a relief train or signal an airplane. From this point he moved uneasily to a higher hill standing like a monument above the others. With aching eyes he stood there immovable staring eastward where the heat lay like a sea of heaving glue.

He could hear his own breath wheezing. He could hear his heart pumping in his ears. He could hear the roaring of the silence. He could hear the movement of a pebble. A feeling of peace was upon him; but he could hear the movement of a pebble. He could hear the rattle of an unseen pebble!

Ravenscroft's sagging body slowly stiffened, fearing the shock and consequence of a sudden move; for as he turned his head he saw shadows in motion among the rocks, shadows glossy with sweat and grease. Sunlight flashed on reddened steel. He stood stupefied and apathetic, as a man does when face to face with a swaying hamadryad in the brief instant before death strikes.

With senseless photographic clarity he saw seven Danakil spearmen rising from the rocks below him, noting how true to race they were, Hamito-Semitic, fuzzy-headed demons with an almost effeminate delicacy of feature. With curious detachment he saw the stains upon their skinny bodies; the sunlight making reddish auras about the lime-bleached shocks of hair; the slimy trophies hanging at their waists; the big lumps of amber hanging on cords about their necks even as the *bouda* bag still hung on his own. He saw the spears and curved knives; the big mouths and the wild eyes fixed hungrily upon him. He saw this all with an aloof and dumb fearlessness—as if it were a thing unreal—as if—

If only he remained quite still, some barrier might rise to interpose itself again and this agony, too, would pass. Then, as he stood unmoving, it appeared to him that the Danakils were making no further move forward but were staring at him with widened eyes rolling in their sockets.

Instead of rushing forward to flesh their spears, they stooped warily with blades drooping at their sides, staring not at him but into the sky directly above his head. It is an airplane, he thought, but there was no sound of an airplane. There was no sound at all except the blood pounding in his ears and the rattle of a pebble. Yes, there was a sound! There was a soft whirring sound of something above him—a soft fluttering sound. He lifted his face; and a pigeon, fluttering out of the glaring sky, settled on his shoulder. Instinctively, Ravenscroft's hands went up, pressed against the dazed bird, captured it.

He remained standing there until the Danakils melted away among the rocks with long murmuring sighs, and a great peacefulness descended upon him.

The whistle of a train shattered the silence. Shouts rose from the valley. Helmeted heads bobbed among the rocks where the Danakils had disappeared. Ravenscroft hoped the newcomers were not Italians.

They were French railwaymen from Jibuti. As they examined the wreckage, the train conductor took Ravenscroft by the elbow and pointed to the empty crates.

"There's where your bird came from! Pigeons from Italy consigned to the Governor General! That pigeon must have been half blinded by the sun—like desert quail fluttering down to a waterhole. It simply thought you were a tree-stump or an ant-hill and flew to rest upon you!"

"That's one on Badoglio!" said Ravenscroft in a rasping whisper.

The Frenchmen were dejected by news from Europe and harassed by native raids inspired by Italians. They were fearful these raids might be extended into campaigns against Jibuti itself and British Somaliland—as indeed they soon were. Ravenscroft, therefore, was but one of the few fortunate ones who had escaped, and so he reached Jibuti without attracting extraordinary attention.

At the house of the Englishman in Jibuti he found an admiring A.P.O. who had come over from Aden to help with his despatches and to see he got aboard safely.

After handing over his field-book Ravenscroft sank into a tub bath where he lay blissfully in soak while an Arab barber worked on his head and a Hindu boy poured pegs of Scotch and cold wa-

ter within reach of either hand. When he appeared again in soft white drill he was a different man, except for his whispering hoarseness and the tremor of his hands. His shaven neck and chin had a piebald effect and his eyes were badly bloodshot and puckered. Otherwise he was all right. At that time he didn't think much of his own information.

"What!" protested the A.P.O. "After what happened at Dunkirk, it's priceless! We can let the Dagoes have all Somaliland if they want it, but we must keep command of the sea and air. Now that we know exactly where their nests are we can keep them off Aden. And some day, by God, we'll bomb them to hell with our own planes."

"Some day," Ravenscroft yawned. He was distressed that no word had been heard of Bunji. Apparently the old man had never reached Jibuti.

"No use waiting here for him," the A.P.O. suggested. "You never can tell, the way things are going. They may intern us. We'll start inquiries for Bunji—and let's you and me hop over to Aden."

"Well—" Ravenscroft demurred, rubbing his chin.

"Well, why not?"

"He's got my gold watch!"

The A.P.O. laughed loud and long.

TWO weeks later, in Aden, the A.P.O. dropped in on Ravenscroft in his quarters. Bunji had been picked up in Zeyla in British Somaliland, trying to sell Ravenscroft's watch to a Banian trader.

"The bloody thief!"

"Oh, no! He claims it's all your fault. You cheated him. He says your *bouda* showed the moon the way until he got to Dire-Dawa—and there it died on him—just died! And the moon didn't fall from the sky—and the sun rose just the same as it always does."

"It was an eight-day watch," Ravenscroft said, abashed. "I forgot to tell him about winding it." He put his hand to his mouth to keep from laughing, because he felt rather shocked. In a way he had indeed cheated the old man, gambling his life on a childish story. No, it wasn't so funny. He slowly poured soda in his whiskey. "Sorry about that. We swapped *boudas,* you know. I expect he really had faith in his *bouda*—and he took my junk on faith too. Didn't he ask about his *bouda* bag?"

"Oh, didn't he! He says you're a master magician—and a master cheat. So far as he's concerned to hell with his *bouda,* says he. It appears you squeezed the last pippet of usefulness out of his *bouda*—and now it's as empty of power as an old sock."

Ravenscroft let the long drink pour down his delighted throat as he opened the drawer of his desk with his free hand. He tossed the *bouda* bag before the A.P.O. "I've got a lot of drinking to do," he said. "Here, take a dekko at this."

The A.P.O. shook the contents of the bag upon a blotter and adjusted his monocle to examine the scraps under the lamplight. Not satisfied, he picked up a reading glass.

"Hum," he observed. "I wouldn't give a penny for it myself. They sometimes have nuggets and crystals in 'em, you know. This has only bugs. Let's see. Well, here's a piece of beeswax—wild bees, I judge. Some insects—look like fireflies to me. And a few feathers—just ordinary pigeon's feathers."

Ravenscroft choked over his drink, trying to croak out some words.

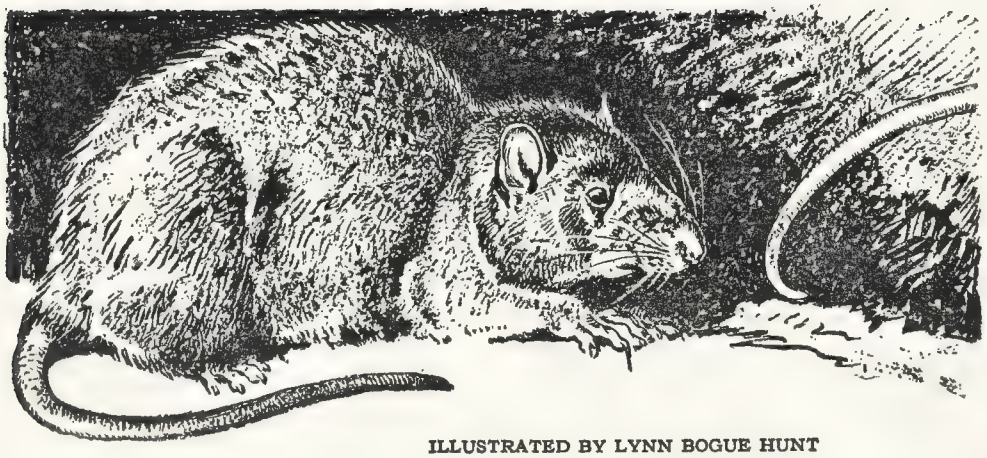
"What?" asked the A.P.O. sharply.

"Cursed palsy," Ravenscroft sputtered. "Name those things over again, will you?"

Turning the scraps over thoughtfully with a pencil, the A.P.O. repeated: "Mess of wild bees . . . some fireflies . . . five or six pigeon's feathers. Absolutely all. What's the matter? Does it make sense?"

Wiping his wet lips with the back of his hand, Ravenscroft dared not look at the A.P.O. His gaze became fixed and distant, clouding with a sudden vision. He saw wild bees. He saw fireflies. He saw a pigeon coming out of an empty sky. Reaching for the whiskey, he cast an indignant look at the A.P.O.

"Not at all! Not at all!" he growled. "I was only thinking what amazing allies the bloody Empire has—and they're never going to be mentioned even in despatches!"



ILLUSTRATED BY LYNN BOGUE HUNT

DEEP-WATER RAT

By PAUL ANNIXTER

FROM the very first month of his life, Mus, the ubiquitous old wharf rat, seemed predestined for adventure. Though his kind hailed from north Europe, he was born in a dark hole among the perennially moist and dripping stones of the Marseille waterfront. He was a Nordic, was Mus, not exactly the blond type, yet there was a distinctly grayish overtone to his brown livery. *Mus* was his family name; *Ratus ratus,* he was called in the learned books, a repetition implying an excessively ratlike rattiness—a super rat. And that was what he was—big and powerful with the grim strength of the conqueror, one of the fierce, roving race of Norway rats that for over two centuries have been slowly conquering the rest of the rodent world.

A plain robber was Mus, a thief and a vandal, and the warfare against his kind cost America alone nearly a million dollars a year. Yet there was something admirable about the old pirate too, something that made sailors and dockhands miss seeing him when they had been used to him for a month or a year. Mus warred against man and animal alike and no other existence would have been conceivable for him save a stealthy life of theft and rapine among the dark and odorous underways.

In the very first month of his existence Mus faced death in the dark and fought for his life. That fierce old tyrant of the waterfront, his father, smelled out the family nest one night in the deep cranny where the she-rat, his mother, had hidden her litter. Numerous times before, that crafty old villain had turned upon his own litter when times were lean, driven by that grim law of Nature that turns the rat tribe against their own kind, their own family, because of their unmitigated ferocity.

In the stifling blackness Mus heard squeal after squeal as one after another of his eight brothers and sisters were cornered or done to death. Mus, the biggest of the brood, found himself out of the nest and slithering down an almost vertical bolt-hole, his one remaining brother close at his tail. Along hundreds of feet of dank passages worn by the traffic of hundreds of generations of rats they scuttled, only to become aware that their sire was still running their trail. Close at hand Mus heard the fear-choked gibber of the last brother. He flung himself into a narrow cranny in the nick of time as his sire rushed him, and for the next two minutes he gave mighty account of himself. It was part of the phenomenal luck that attended his youth that the cranny was only wide enough

Mus' shark-like jaws drove home to the throat, set in a steel-vise grip and held.

to admit his father's shark-like snout. Each time it inserted itself, Mus slashed out with tooth and claw. The fierce gnome-like chattering of the two and the gleam of their amber eyes in the blackness was something to dream about nights. It quickly became plain to the sire that this Mus, this biggest and grimmest of his sons, would take some killing. He withdrew, but not to stay.

IN the first gray filter of dawn Mus bolted into the passage. Within a minute his father was running his trail again. Mus climbed desperately up and up and finally broke out into full daylight. Under a push truck he dodged and between the legs of dockworkers and on to cover beneath the pilings of a warehouse. His crafty father loved life better than he, for he doubled back to the safe dark of the underways again.

All day Mus hid beneath the warehouse, breathing in the salty, tarry smells, listening to the talk of the dockhands above him and the rumble of shifting cargo. Hunger brought him forth at dark and following his nose he ran out along a great cable that moored a freighter to the dock, plopped to her deck and scuttled into the dark hold where provender was stored. Before dawn came the ship was in motion and Mus' world travels had begun.

The freighter was old and slow and it was six weeks before she docked in San Francisco. Mus, hiding in the cran-

nies amid the cargo, lived richly all the way and grew apace in weight and wile. In the tropics he suffered from the heat in the airless hold and at night he would slip up on deck and crouch among the coils of rope to get cool. It was thus he looked upon the marvelous locks of Colon and Panama, his nose working as he sampled the varied tropic smells.

At San Francisco he disembarked and spent a wonderful month ashore. He put in a week among the wharves of the waterfront for he loved the tarry, fishy smells. Then he picked an old building a block from the harbor, which had a cheap restaurant on the ground floor and sailors' lodgings above. The building had many a hole and crack in its foundations and its walls had long ago been tunneled by mice. Mus had a marvelous time there making life tough for all the inmates, including the mice. Nights he would creep down and raid the restaurant kitchen. Then he alternately slept and gnawed, chased the mice through their wall galleries, or crouched at some hole mouth watching the humans. He was terrified yet fascinated by men. Many a boot and many an oath was flung at him.

Restless again, Mus left the boarding house and shipped out aboard another third-rate freighter for Seattle. That was not a nice ship and it did not tarry in Seattle more than two hours. Mus should have gotten off, but he didn't and a week later there was frost on his whiskers and he was seeing his own breath, for the ship was making for a whaling port far up among the Aleutian Islands. For three months thereafter, Mus fought cold and privation, living from paw to mouth, pilfering scraps of food practically from under the nose of the galley cook. Had it not been for some leather and tarry rope he found in the hold, it is doubtful if Mus would have come through alive.

BY the time the ship returned south again where life was soft and easy, Mus was a mature buck rat of grim mien and achievement. He was long and lean and had developed yellowed chisels for teeth. He had a sharklike cut of jib that was startling to behold, combined with the bright glitter of his beady little eyes. Not a pennyweight of excess flesh remained on his body and now there was added to his natural voracity for food the second great hunger of his kind.

Filled with conflicting desires he went ashore at Seattle. Within three hours he had engaged in three fierce battles with his kind, for some fury that was upon him made him fall upon every rat he saw. They were wicked, bitter affairs, fought with the high-nosed, shark-like cutting strokes that go with undershot jaws. One of the buck rats he killed; the other two fled before him. But it was two days later before his nose promised an answer to the new hunger that was upon him.

She was a young, unmated rat, who left the trail he followed, captious, and of course, beautiful—all ladies to one from a frozen and ladyless land are, *ex-officio*, beautiful. And the way her trail meandered about, leading anywhere and nowhere in a blind, blandishing, burrowing fashion was quite maddening. She led Mus a hectic chase around and under and into three city blocks of warehouse buildings. It is not to be supposed that she ran very fast or hid very hard, however, for two hours later found her quite satisfactorily come up with. That courtship was not all sordidness and savagery; it had its moments of tenderness, even of high courage and heroism, in the parlous week that followed. But the wandering rat tribe do not tarry long together. Fulfilled and consummated Mus returned to the waterfront, a full-fledged rat-about-town. There was actually a different look to him now, a new and arrogant assurance it seemed, a Rabelaisian gleam of eye and lilt of whisker. Humans who caught the toothy smile with which Mus favored them from the mouth of his hole were not apt to forget him now.

He shipped out again on a tanker bound for Valparaiso, mated again in that polyglot city and shortly afterward took ship for China. It was in Canton that he came to land again, hot, teeming, odorous Canton, the Elysium of the traveling rats of all the seven seas. The endless litter and the rich ripe smells of

the ancient city held Mus for nearly a year. He threaded the noisome stenchful human hive from end to end and back again. Here men and rats lived side by side as a matter of course, without warfare or hatred. Debris lay everywhere, even by day one might nibble and scrabble endlessly without fear that the hateful squads of White Wings would appear and sweep up all just as one uncovered something choice.

Mus had many a perilous adventure there, for he had become bold and high-handed as Herod in his maturity. It was down on the Canton river bank in one of his reckless forays that Mus lost most of his right forepaw in a battle with a monster gray rat. Rats really fight, they are not content with merely scrapping; they go quite mad, demented. By every law Mus should have died in that encounter, for the giant gray one was a very ogre of his kind, the tyrant of the river front. But Fate had clearly backed Mus to win at odds on. The second shark-like stroke of his jaws drove home to the throat, set in a steel-vise grip, and held.

IN the next year and a half Mus went more places than Ulysses ever dreamed of—Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nagasaki, Kobe, Calcutta, Madras, Singapore, and thence by long and stormy passage across the sea to Port of Spain, in Trinidad. Ever the perfect Jorrocks among the opposite sex, he had more wives than Solomon. Wherever he stayed for a week or a month he left a numerous progeny behind him.

In Port Of Spain it was that Mus fell ill from the terrible rat plague which infested the underways of that ancient town. That was a fearsome illness, akin to bubonic plague in the human family. A thousand rats died of it to one that recovered, but Mus was tough and grim and somehow he survived. Instinct drove him out of the disease-ridden area, and predilection made him ship to sea again "before the mast." The wind ships were ever the ships he loved, the ships where provender was always accessible and the warfare of the sailors against his kind was negligible. Wavering and half blind from the fever in his blood, Mus climbed aboard an old wind-jammer in plain sight of the crew lounging about her deck. The men smiled and made no move to stop him. He was a tradition of their kind and they wanted the good auspices of his presence, for they were setting out on a long and hazardous voyage under canvas 'round the Horn. They did not dream that death had boarded them too, in the form of disease-bearing fleas in Mus' fur.

That was an ill-fated voyage. A day after putting to sea, the cook in the galley where Mus spent most of his time, fell ill. A day later four more men were down with fever. Of the five, three of them died within two weeks. Short-handed and battling the bitter polar winds below the Horn, the ship was blown far off her course. Weeks later dragging a spar and some inwards, so to speak, she limped into harbor at Auckland, New Zealand. By that time Mus was quite well again, but he had a desperate time of it in Auckland, weeks of cold and privation before he caught another vessel north.

It was Marseille, the place of his birth, that received him next. Mus knew in the mysterious way of rats, before ever he set his privy paw on soil. He remembered through a score of subtle sounds, scents and sensations, and he was glad. For despite Nordic ancestry and roving blood he was really a Frenchman by predilection. He reveled in the particular waterfront smells and dived with a strange elation into the known yet unremembered runways of his babyhood.

And now began the new life and different adventures of Mus' declining years, or rather months. What had happened in Europe during Mus' world travels, became Mus' tragedy as well as France's. Mus' carefree roaming life came sharply to an end.

All Europe had been flung into a state of war during Mus' absence; France was gone—the whole country, even Paris, was overrun with Germans. It was a vicious soulless business and it was quite fitting that fierce, wicked old Mus should have been billed to play a part in the affair.

Even down in Marseille Mus felt in

his submerged, subconscious way the repercussions of it all. Do animals not suffer? What happens to man dreadfully affects even the meanest creatures living in his environment. The dark and stealthy lower regions in which Mus lived were wholly dependent on the shifts and quirks of human fortune in the surface world above and that upper world had now convulsed and blackened itself.

Ill at ease, harried, restless, Mus crept forth and boarded a docked vessel one night and left the city. That was different from any ship Mus had ever prowled. She was a war transport and hospital ship, constructed of metal, sterile and sanitary as a concrete vault and smelling abominably of medicines. Nearly starved, Mus disembarked at Le Havre only to find times far leaner there than they had been in Marseille. Mus had to join the verminous ranks of the city's sewer rats to survive.

THERE is an old French saying, tried and proven through centuries of warfare, to the effect that, "France is all right so long as the rats in Paris are fat." Now the rats were no longer fat in Paris. They were no longer fat in Le Havre, or anywhere else in France, for the thundering German juggernauts of war had crushed through the land. Doom and Dunkirk had come and passed, the food of the land had been usurped, even the wine taken for the making of enemy fuel.

Mus smelled fear and finality in the air, felt danger in every hair tip. And there was nothing to eat. Desperate one night he clambered aboard another ship bound up the Channel. Stealthy and camouflaged she nosed through the fog toward Liverpool and an hour later Mus was really in the war.

In the first dawn light he heard the hurrying feet above, then sharp orders and the clap of thunder from the hidden guns on the transport's deck. Then the world-shaking crash that rocked the ship from stem to stern and seemed to lift her from the water, as a torpedo from the German submarine *U 66* tore open her hull. Nothing I can say can quite describe the horror of the explosion below, and of course it was much more terrible down in the hold where Mus was. Mus knew before anyone else aboard by the rush and gurgle of entering waters, that the ship was doomed.

She was settling fast by the time he climbed to the light above. When the struggling crew saw Mus scuttle down the careening deck and plop overside to some floating boards and debris, they gave up hope and quickly lowered the small boats. The *U 66* had now nosed alongside, not out of mercy, but for the purpose of renewing its meager food supply. Five or six armed Germans came aboard and hurriedly raided the ship of its choicest stores. In the meantime the plank to which Mus was clinging floated close to the U-boat. When it bumped against her side, he scuttled aboard, unseen.

It was nightfall and nearly a hundred miles north before any of the crew saw Mus. The old superstition of the sea was at work even on that death ship, for the crew of the sub welcomed the sight of Mus, feeling that luck attended the *U 66* or a rat would never have come aboard.

Not so, however, when the commander saw him. In his quarters that night he looked up suddenly and caught Mus' fanged smile as the old rat regarded him from behind a metal door frame. He was a Prussian, that commander, and his toothy smile, his hard ferine gaze and his short crisp mustache were not unlike Mus' own. His nerve was after the fashion of Mus', too; he had been decorated for same by Hitler himself (while Goebbels screamed). But by his expression now it might have been the ghosts of all the innocent folk he had sent to a watery grave instead of a rat he was gazing at. His cheek looked greenish under the glare of the round ceiling light and his hand was creeping to the service revolver at his side when Mus flicked from sight, going like a six-inch shell.

Then the commander sent for his second officer and together behind closed doors they discussed Mus with the gravity of an attack maneuver. From his hiding place under an iron locker Mus heard their guttural talk and the file-edged German laughter of the men in their distant quarters.

Here was the situation. The presence of Mus on board the submarine spelled constant and harrowing danger for all. For there were numerous things that Mus might accidentally do. He might gnaw away the tarry insulation of the main cable and cause a short circuit and fire. He might accidentally wedge his body into the delicate machinery at some critical point that would send the ship to the bottom, out of control. Or he might get into an exhaust pipe or an air intake valve and suffocate all on board. Only the two officers realized these things. And they dare not tell the men for fear of undermining their morale.

The commander's first order was for a general rat hunt by all hands. The fifty-two men of the crew prowled the ship from end to end in pairs and trios, trying to get Mus in a corner and do him in or capture him under the hatches. Two or three hours proved the uselessness of all that. Mus had a score of handy bolt-holes and runways. Such clumsy horseplay was a joke to him. From a dozen inaccessible vantage points he showed white teeth in a grin at his pursuers.

THE commander became desperate. He was under strict orders to patrol night and day until further notice, in his grim work of destruction. No chance to lie on the surface with hatches closed till the unwelcome stowaway was asphyxiated, and in these waters there were only enemy ports to put into.

At dawn he reversed his tactics, ordering food to be laid out for Mus in various places about the ship. The men grinned, not realizing that it was a case of feeding the old rat for safety's sake, so that he would not become restless and start gnawing. Besides the food two traps and some slices of phosphorus were laid in odd corners. But old in wile and experience, Mus knew all about such clumsy artifices. He ate of the food laid out for him, but sparingly, seeming to prefer to pilfer his own as he had always done, from the galley, and even from the table in the crew's quarters. But no amount of food could subdue the old gourmet nor keep him from prowling, scratching and nibbling at this and that.

Day and night the grim game of hide and seek continued. With relentless and mechanical precision the fifty-four Germans on the *U 66* carried on their lethal duties as crew of a death ship, and canny old Mus carried on the natural devilries of the life he had been born to, for he met and mocked each play the humans made. Night after night the two officers would be jerked out of uneasy sleep to go prowling the passageways with the shine of nervous sweat on their faces as they listened to his restless scrabbling and gnawing. Mus recognized these as his special enemies on board. He knew well when they came and when they went. He knew every step in the ship.

And how he enjoyed it all! He had really come to love that submarine. Never a dull moment aboard. The old villain seemed to savor each shift and turn of the game and revel in the spice of danger entailed.

He should have been well content, fed to repletion as he was by toothsome and unexpected handouts, left in half a dozen odd corners, but he had to outdo himself and start gnawing the black tarry insulation of the main cable. The men quickly became aware of this new offensive. Even the crew were now conscious of the danger involved. They listened to Mus' faint and buried gnawings as to a death watch in the wall. A day of that and the stowaway had demoralized the entire ship.

On the second day a steel partition was bored and sawed away with tremendous labor and one of the men crawled through the aperture to mend the damage Mus had done. Mus merely retreated deeper into the bowels of the ship and gaily continued his mutilation of another section of the cable.

He had been at this alternately for two days and nights when affairs came to the head that had long been making. After a harried and practically sleepless night the commander had decided to head back to his submarine base, regardless of orders, when the klaxons wailed throughout the ship signaling that fresh prey had been sighted. Both

officers hastened eagerly to the conning tower.

The ship was a huge American transport flying the U. S. flag. The commander glared at her through his binocular. He knew instantly what she was—one of the many American vessels that were now carrying food and equipment to Russia. Officially, she rated safe passage.

In the past few weeks, however, orders issued to U-boat commanders had become highly elastic, to say the least. This ship was of a size and tonnage to bring water to the mouth of one whose future fame and advancement depended upon tonnage totals and ships destroyed. The Prussian commander felt he could not resist her.

FOR just a moment he thought again uneasily of old Mus somewhere down in the dark below; then, oblivious to the strained questioning gaze of his second officer, he pronounced the words of doom.

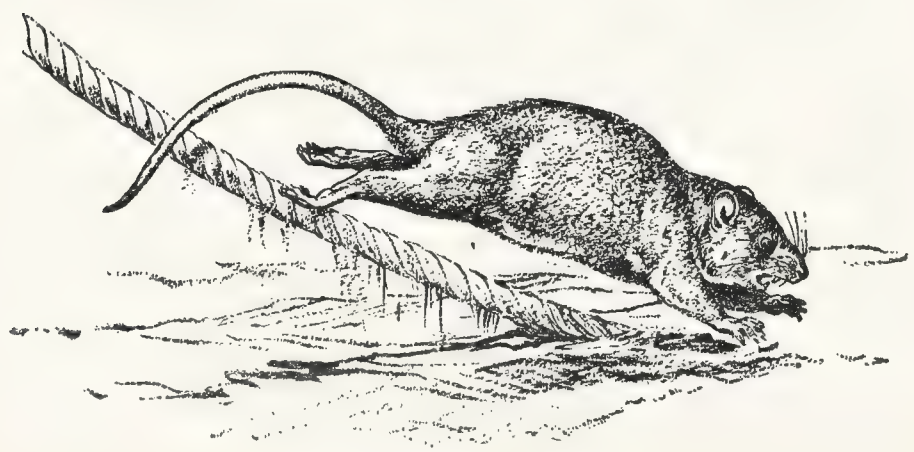
Not for the transport, however. For in the same minute that the *U 66* rose to the surface and her torpedo men took aim, two things happened. The busy teeth of old Mus uncovered a patch of raw wire in the cable he had been gnawing, resulting in a flash, the smell of smoke and fire and total darkness throughout the submarine; and a watchful gunner on board the transport sighted the U-boat rising to the surface and sent a nine-pound shot close across her black bow.

Mus, suffering the fright of his life and an electric shock as well, came hurtling out of the bowels of the submarine and flung himself blindly into the revolving mechanism of the electric engines. Result: a moment after the gun on board the American vessel spoke, the watching men upon her deck saw the U-boat nose abruptly downward in a crash dive, out of all control, from which she never rose again.

A few days later when the *U 66* was definitely reported among the missing, the gunner and the transport captain came in for a great deal of exorbitant praise.

The captain was feted in London and the gunner became known as "the man with the X-ray eyes." Both took it with whimsical lightness, for the gunner would have sworn that he had not made a direct hit, and the captain had really done nothing at all. No one, of course, outside of the U-boat crew, knew anything about the part old Mus had played, or ever would know. Animals were never designed to have anything to do with modern civilized (?) warfare.

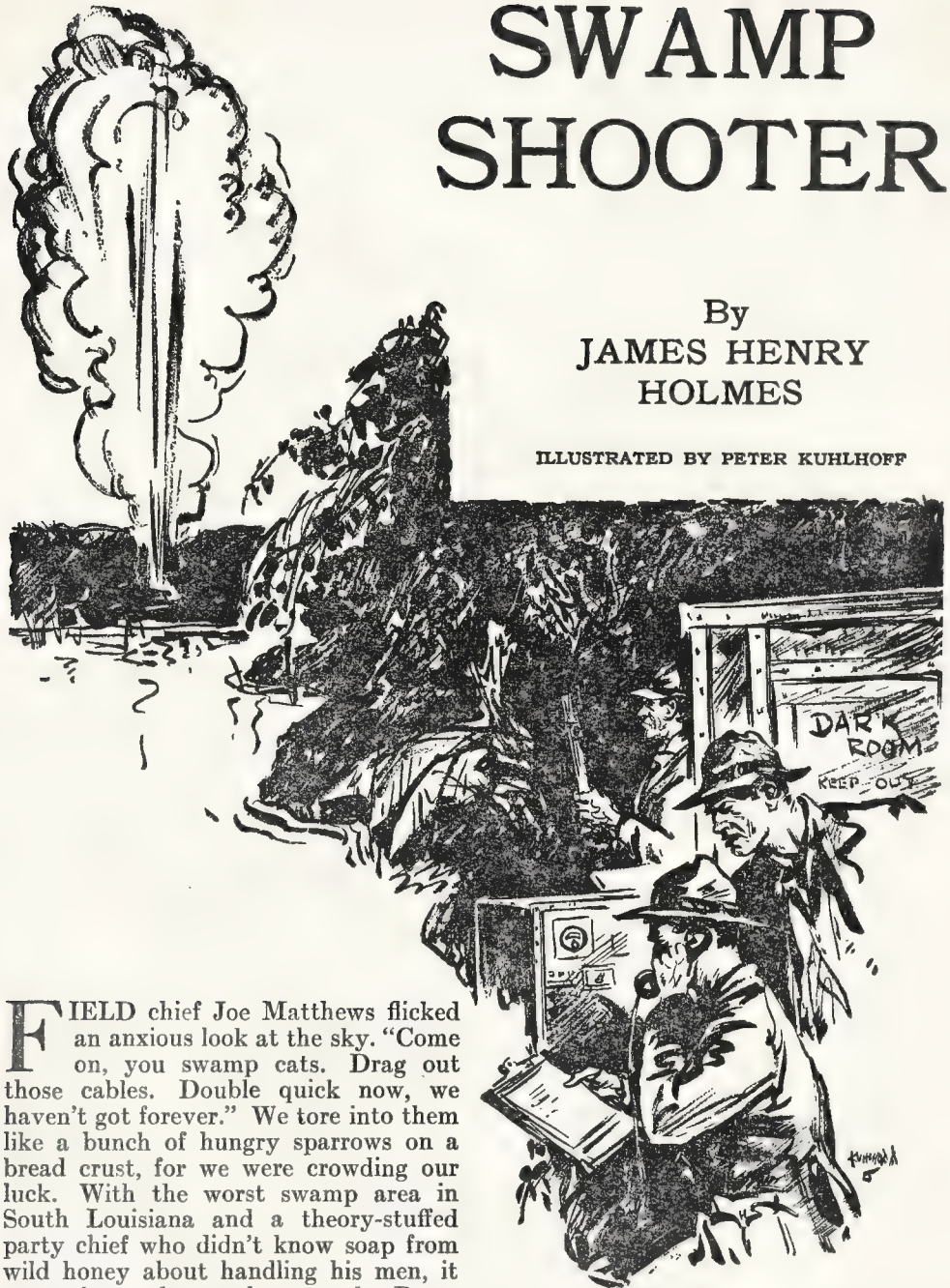
There is a certain balance to things, however, in spite of the Dictators.



SWAMP SHOOTER

By JAMES HENRY HOLMES

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF



"Shoot the shot!" Joe yelled over the short wave.

FIELD chief Joe Matthews flicked an anxious look at the sky. "Come on, you swamp cats. Drag out those cables. Double quick now, we haven't got forever." We tore into them like a bunch of hungry sparrows on a bread crust, for we were crowding our luck. With the worst swamp area in South Louisiana and a theory-stuffed party chief who didn't know soap from wild honey about handling his men, it was going to be rough as a cob. Party seven was still Rimrock Oil's crack seismograph crew but if we failed here Rimrock was done, bankrupt. That meant me too, for all my family had was in Rimrock Oil. It was up to Joe.

Joe knew it. He hadn't been field chief for three years for nothing and he was working us under terrific pressure, riding, driving the crew like a bunch of draft horses. But we didn't care. That was part of a doodlebugger's job. Joe was everywhere, doing the work of two men himself. His long legs carrying him

from one end of the spread to the other like driving pistons.

Those electric cables writhed and hissed through the slime and dense palmetto underbrush extending four on each side of the observer's boat like long black tentacles from some fantastic swamp spider. We had those cables out and hooked to the sensitive little seismometers in nothing flat and were back, rolling a smoke.

"Careful with that match, Burrhead," Joe warned me nervously. "This swamp is tinder dry." I nodded and carefully threw the match into the stagnant water. We were all jittery for we were working against time. We had to be finished and out of there before the rainy season started and the high water came or we were sunk. The treacherous river running through the middle of that swamp would rise overnight with a "whoosh," sweeping men and equipment before it, we knew. Now Joe was listening to Cole, the observer, calling Lee West, the shooter, on the short wave set we shot by.

"Hello, Lee? Hello, Lee?" he called.

"O. K., Cole," the loudspeaker popped. "Loaded forty-five. All set?"

"All set. Quiet outside!" Cole yelled at us, then back to Lee. "Shoot the shot!" The earth bucked and a column of water and chunks of mud blasted skyward with a roar as forty-five pounds of dynamite sixty feet down exploded.

"All right on that door," called Cole and I slammed it, shutting him in his tiny darkroom. We could hear him moving about developing his record.

NOW everyone knows a seismograph is for recording earthquakes. But some bright guy adapted it to oil exploration and designed one that would record miniature earthquakes made by dynamite explosions. We drill a shallow hole and explode a charge of dynamite in it. That makes sound waves that travel down through the earth like waves on a pool when you throw a rock into it. These waves go down and bounce back up to the sensitive little seismometers or mechanical ears. They pick them up and send them over the electric cables to the observer's recording camera and that's where we get our records. We can tell what is down there by the time it takes the waves to travel down and back again. It takes longer for them to travel through rock than sand and so on.

Sometimes we take refraction shots, exploding from three to eight hundred pounds of dynamite in a pit, but not often. That gives more information at once but it costs lots of dough and it's plenty dangerous. But that's doodlebugging. And, Mister, it's not child's play. Joe was anxious to see the record and he stood beside the door. He was plenty worried, I knew.

Cole savagely kicked the door open.

"Damn, it's hot in here," he swore and spread the wet record out on a board across his knees. A sudden excited light flashed in Joe's eyes and he reached quickly for the last two records, running his finger along the tracings. By the way Joe jumped to his feet I knew we were close to our dome. Now a dome is a formation or blister in the rock layers like a blister on your finger and oil collects under it the same as the water under your blister. About a million dollars worth of it a mile under ground. That's what we wanted.

"Finish this hole and stand by," Joe jerked out tersely and took off up the line ahead like a turpentined cat.

By the time we'd made a couple more shots he was back with the surveyors and drillers. They hurriedly began laying out a line at right angles to the shot point. That meant the dome was over behind the settlement somewhere for that was the direction of the lie. But that's as far as he got. He hadn't gone thirty feet into the brush when he came face to face with old man Leblanc and his crazy son Jules. Joe found himself looking into a shotgun muzzle.

"He-hello, Mr. Leblanc," he stammered surprised. "We're going to shoot your land now." The old man's eyes were snapping. You could see he was mad as hops.

"M'sieur," he said threateningly. "You keep off my land. That loud noise I don't like it to ruin my trapping."

Waving his hands Joe began to ex-

plain. "Mr. Leblanc," he said. "We have an option on your lease and we have to shoot it to see if there is oil there." Old man Leblanc didn't care about that.

"What about my trapping?" he demanded. "That is my living."

Joe looked sober. "We'll pay reasonable damages," he promised. "We're pressed for time. We've got to get in there now. I'll get your check tonight." The old man shook his head.

"No," he snapped. Joe opened his mouth to speak but the old man raised his gun even with Joe's stomach and said grimly, "M'sieur, I will shoot the first man who comes on my land. Now go. *Vite!*" Well, nobody can argue with a shotgun in his stomach and Joe whirled around, face white and eyes shooting sparks of anger.

"Pick 'em up," he yelled. "We're going in." That looked like the end right there for all of us. Everything depended on finishing this area before the overdue rains and high water came. Cursing and scared we hotfooted it back where our houseboat was moored in Muskrat Lake at the mouth of Hyacinth Bayou. Ordinarily we'd have been glad, for nobody minds a layoff with pay. But not now. Joe was swearing.

"Damn," he said bitterly. "Drake will have a cat fit." We all knew that. Nobody liked the dopy new party chief anyhow. The guy looked like a professor with those big hornrimmed glasses and his pretty clothes and chubby face. He acted so damn nice too, not cussing or drinking. Now that ain't natural for a doodlebugger. Besides I'll bet he couldn't lift a fifty-pound box of dynamite even if you could get him that close to one. Joe was sure right about his being mad.

"What's the big idea of bringing your crew in here in the middle of the morning?" Drake stormed at Joe. "You didn't get your full quota of records yesterday. What do you think this is?" Drake wasn't giving him a chance to explain, just started squealing like a pig under a gate. He might know his theory but he didn't know field work and he didn't care. Not so long as we brought in plenty of records. Joe didn't like a guy like that any more than we did.

"Listen, Drake," he spit at him. "There's a man out there with a shotgun. If you want to buck a shotgun in the belly go on out. But I'd advise you to get surface clearance first." Drake was just like some old woman. The home office had him scared to death and he took it out on us.

"I don't care what you have to buck," he yelped. "You've got to finish this area before the rainy season starts. The radio says it's due right now. It's your job to get surface clearance. I'll get you three hours to do it and then I'll take it up with the home office. Get that?" Joe just stood gritting his teeth and clenching his fists, not even trying to explain to the fool what we'd found. He was trying to keep from dough-popping him, for Drake could get him fired for that. Cole stepped between them.

"O. K., Drake," he said coolly. "There's no use getting excited about it. Let Joe talk to the old man. Maybe he can fix it up." Everyone liked Cole in a way, but he had the sharpest tongue and the coldest green eyes you ever saw and he didn't have a close friend on the crew. Drake glared owlishly at him.

"All right," he said angrily. "But the three hours still stands." He turned on his heel and went inside the little field office on the houseboat.

Cole turned to Joe. "It looks like it's up to you, fella," he said. "Can I help?"

"No thanks. I guess not," Joe said dejectedly. "He's right, it's my job." Then he turned, face drawn and anxious, looking out across the hyacinth-choked lake towards St. Felice settlement where the old man lived. It wasn't much of a town, just a few houses and a store grouped around Fat Tony's fish camp and juke joint there on a long slender neck running out into the lake. The lake made a horseshoe around it and the dark swamp trees and dense sawgrass and palmetto underbrush pushed in close around the little settlement, thick and forbidding.

JOE swore softly and climbed into the air-boat while I waited to kick off the propeller, for the starter was busted. An air-boat is a flat bottomed boat with

a motor like a small airplane's mounted on a frame at the stern. That way there's no propeller to get tangled in the roots and hyacinths, under water.

"Contact," I yelled and Joe flipped the switch.

"Contact," he called. I gave the prop a yank and the motor chugged, then blasted into a mounting roar, beginning to move across the lake like an angry hornet. It was hot and sticky as we all lay around waiting on Joe.

When he came back he said the old man wouldn't take a penny less than eight hundred dollars and that in cash. No check. The nearest bank was forty miles away in Morgan City. We all just groaned. That meant we'd have to lose the rest of the day. That didn't seem to occur to Drake though.

"Eight hundred dollars!" he screamed. "The whole area isn't worth that. I never gave that much for surface damages before." Joe whirled on him, disgusted.

"Listen, you dope," he said savagely. "The dome is under that land and eight hundred dollars isn't a drop in the bucket. Besides, it's not costing you a penny. Where do you get that 'I' stuff? If the company wants to pay it, O. K. If you're so scared of your job you better pay off and get to work." Joe was right, we knew. Drake would have too, if he hadn't been new at his job and the responsibility was driving him nuts. I guess the "dome" business got him for he shut up and told Cole to call the head office on the short wave set.

Of course you can't give any details on a short wave set for anyone can listen in. But with a few code words the office got the idea and were plenty glad to pay off. Drake was wiping his glasses, plainly relieved.

"All right, Matthews, you and Cole go get the cash," he said. "The office will call the bank to have it ready and waiting for you." Cole snapped off the short wave set and looked at Drake with those cold green eyes.

"I'm going fishing with Jules Leblanc," he said insolently. "You'll have to get somebody else to run your errands. Besides, we wouldn't have time to get drunk." Cole winked at Joe. He'd just said it to gripe Drake, for he liked to twit him about not drinking. Drake caught it for he went inside. Joe turned to me.

"You come go with me, Burrhead," he said. "I'll get my pistol but I don't want to carry all that money alone." Glad to get away, I went inside to change my clothes. I was grabbing a quick shave while Joe dressed.

"Believe I'll wear my cowboy boots," he said and dragged them from under the bunk. I could see him in the mirror. He was looking ruefully at them for they were mud-caked and dried out. Swearing, he threw them back. "Hell, I forgot to clean them," he growled. "Guess I'll wear these old field boots," and he pulled them on. I gave my face a quick swipe with the towel and we were ready.

As we got into the beat-up old airboat Cole was just paddling off in his pirogue. Those things are tricky little round-bottomed canoes and hard as a budget to balance. Cole handled it like a born Cajun and that's plenty hard to do. That crazy Jules Leblanc must have taught him how, for they hunted and fished together all the time. I watched him admiringly as Joe kicked off the prop and we roared off down the bayou towards the river. We made it in just as the bank was closing and got the money. Then we had a couple of drinks. I jawed with the little waitress I kinda got a crush on and we started back.

IT was just getting dusk when we turned off the river into Hyacinth Bayou. I didn't think much about the money until the dense brush and woods closed in and made things dark. Then a feeling like an icy wind blowing up my spine made goose bumps jump out on my arms as big as sparrow eggs. I guess it was because the draped gray moss made those old trees look sinister and forbidding and the blasphemous roar of that boat echoed and re-echoed profanely through the vast silence like a sudden oath in a cathedral. The black still water seemed fathomless, deep as hell itself whenever a break occurred in the endless hyacinths. Fat

black moccasins yawned widely and slid their blunt bodies under a rotting log. Once three or four slender-legged cranes rose and flew slowly up the bayou ahead of us like white ghosts against the black swamp. It was dark suddenly and Joe switched on the searchlight up front. It cut through the velvet blackness like a sharp silver knife. Suddenly a shot blasted out. We heard it above the roar of the motor and a sharp flat *splat* jarred the boat.

"Is that a piece of information or a lesson in physics?" I whispered and we heard a sharp snap like a limb cracking off in the darkness and I shut up, quick. It was so black you could feel it pressing in on you like a damp warm cloth across your nose, heavy with the decayed and moldering swamp smell. I wondered grimly if we would end up moldering too. When a little old screech owl right over our heads began his spine chilling cry I squeezed Joe's arm tight.

"Hey!" both of us yelled. "Watch where you're shooting!"

"Hey!" both of us yelled. "Watch where you're shooting!" And then it came again. Twice in quick succession a bullet screamed by our ears and we ducked. Joe cut the searchlight and the motor but before the sound stopped another shot scorched my cheek and we fell flat in the boat.

"Somebody shooting at us!" Joe whispered like he couldn't believe it. "They must know we have the money." I wasn't too interested in the cash but I was sure fond of my skin.

"I forgot my pistol," he moaned softly. "Help me get this push pole over the side and keep low." Stomach in knots and heart pounding, I fumbled for it.

Every time that push pole scraped the boat there in that deadly black stillness it sounded loud as a dynamite blast.

It made a little splash as it went overboard and another shot whined viciously close. Then the pole caught in the mud on the bottom and we quit

drifting. Eternity passed, it seemed, when Joe silently started poling up the bayou. The only sound was just a little trickle, like maybe a fish jumping in the water. Rounding a bend in the bayou about an hour later we decided to chance the motor. That was plenty dangerous in the dark with a dead starter.

"You flip the switch and I'll give her a twist," Joe whispered. "I'll touch you with my toe, when I'm ready." That prop can cut a man in two and I cursed to myself, hand on the switch. Then I felt Joe's toe. I didn't need to say anything, the switch sounded like a rat trap snapping. The boat rocked and I held my breath as Joe gathered for the heave. It came. The sudden noise cut my breath and I jumped for the searchlight as Joe crawled to safety and gunned her. Knotted and aching, my back muscles were bunched, waiting for a bullet. But it didn't come and we roared up that bayou like a couple of scalded cats. The guy must have either been just trying to scare us or was afraid we were laying for him in the dark. I don't know which, but I sure know I was plenty glad to see the lights on the houseboat. I all but jumped overboard when Joe punched me.

"Don't say anything about this," he said grimly. "There's something going on here I don't understand but I don't want the boys to get scared and quit." Not pretending to understand it, I just nodded as we came alongside the houseboat.

The crew were all over at Fat Tony's juke joint drinking beer. Drake wasn't though. Not him. He was staying away from such dens of iniquity. He was waiting for us when we came alongside. He jumped in the boat and we went on to the settlement.

While Joe and Drake went to pay the old man and get him to sign the contract, I stopped at Tony's. I got a big stiff drink of Tony's good old swamp moonshine. I needed something strong and there's nothing stronger than that stuff. Blinking a couple of times, I grabbed a glass of water and a piece of lemon. Then I spied Cole and that crazy Jules over in the corner booth, eating the fish they'd caught. Taking my drink, I went over and sat with them. They weren't too cordial.

"Where did you go fishing?" I asked, and they both looked up quick-like.

"Oh," said Cole, laughing. "We aren't telling where our good fish hole is."

"You hear any shots?" I asked before I remembered Joe telling me to keep my trap shut and not scare the crew.

"None but our own," Cole said slowly. "Why?"

"Oh," I said, trying to think up a reason quick. "Oh, nothing. I just thought there might be some hunters out today." Just then Joe and Drake came in. "Here's Joe and Drake," I said like a fool. I could have patted Drake on the back then for saving me, because he started hollering about having a hard day tomorrow and we all ought to be in bed. Cole liked to twit him so much he forgot me.

"Come on over and have a drink, Drake," he said in a voice that wasn't loud but it carried all over the place. "It'll make a man out of you." Everyone grinned and Drake's face got red, but he acted like he hadn't heard. Then everyone downed his drink and scrambled for the best places in the boats.

Joe was talking to Tony as I started past. I heard him ask how much fish Jules and Cole had caught. Tony said none, he guessed, since they'd bought what they were eating from him. I turned to kid Cole about his fishing hole when Lee gave me a shove and I fell out the door and almost into the lake. Cole was coming along in his pirogue behind us so I'd get him at the houseboat. That swamp moonshine had more kick than I thought, though, for I was sound asleep when he came in.

JOE waked me the next morning cussing anybody that thought it was funny to pour a man's cowboy boots full of water. I just growled because I didn't feel so good and somebody was always doing that anyway. Then the cook called us.

"Come and get it," he whooped and we hit that breakfast table like a plague

of locusts. Going out to the field I saw Joe picking at the bullet hole in the boat with his knife. I didn't say anything because I'd almost spilled the beans last night and I didn't feel too good. With the first gray light we were at work. Then the sun came up and we shed our shirts, for not a breath of air stirred. The sky had a gray haze to it that put everyone on edge. It looked like rain.

Joe was worse than ever and he drove and whipped us through the swamp like a bunch of mules. We were beginning on the second to last line when here came Drake, his face pasty. There was some guy with him. He had a star on his shirt.

"Now what the hell," growled Joe wearily. "It must be plenty bad to get Drake out here in the swamp. Just look at his face." Drake was moaning low.

"Somebody robbed Mr. Leblanc of the eight hundred dollars and almost killed him with a crack on the head. He's still unonscious," he wailed. "The sheriff wants to ask you boys some questions." That was the strangest looking outfit you ever saw. A bunch of tough doodlebuggers, sweat-stained and muddy, standing around answering questions like a bunch of school kids.

"Which of you boys have a pair of cowboy boots?" the sheriff wanted to know. Nobody had to answer that one, the way we all turned and looked at Joe. Joe's eyes got big and he looked down at his feet.

"Why, I do," he said slowly. "I've got them on." And he stuck out his foot. The sheriff glanced down, then shot him a quick ugly look.

"Can you explain how those boots made some tracks around Mr. Leblanc's front porch last night?" he demanded grimly. Joe's lean face got red, then white.

"Why, no," he said hoarsely. "I can't. I went to town yesterday and I didn't wear them because they were dirty." Then his jaw got hard. "Come to think of it they were dry and stiff then. This morning they were so wet I could hardly get them on. Somebody is trying to frame me." The sheriff didn't look convinced.

"That's what they all say, son," he snapped. Then I remembered Joe throwing them back while I was shaving and how he woke me up cussing about their being wet.

"That's right," I piped up. "I went with him yesterday. He didn't wear them. But this morning we thought someone had poured water in them for a joke." The sheriff speared me with his eyes.

"Maybe you're in on it too," he said suspiciously. "Maybe you helped him. You know so much about it." I could feel my mouth fly open and then I got mad. But Lee spoke up in time to keep me from making a fool of myself.

"That's right, Sheriff," he said, sort of hard, like he dared him to accuse him. "I was right there and heard it too. We couldn't all be in on it now, could we?" he asked too sweetly. The sheriff didn't say any more. Because Lee's no child, slinging those boxes of dynamite around like he does. The sheriff glared at us.

"O.K.," he said in a harsh flat voice. "The rest of you can go on working. Matthews, you come with me."

Ordinarily we would have taken it easy after Joe left, but not now. We had to get done and out of there. We even brought in enough records to satisfy Drake. When we finished that day we could see the end for we only had a couple more lines to shoot. But they were plenty tough. One ran down the side and the other at right angles behind the settlement, completing a square, a mile and a half back in the swamp. The haze in the sky was darker now and we'd have to hump to get done.

Then we found we were all under technical arrest waiting for the old man to come around. Joe and the sheriff brought in a doctor because that crazy Jules wouldn't let Drake and Joe move the old man. Stood them off with that 25.30 rifle of his. The Doc said he'd be around soon. But when we went to the field the next morning the old man was conscious but unable to talk. Joe was staying in and I had to help Lee on the shot point.

That's no fun. Dynamite is tricky stuff and it scares me. Lee did most of the handling, but I still didn't like it.

As the sky got hazier than ever, we knew then that it wasn't clouds. It was smoke! The swamp was on fire.

Everyone was getting skittish and plenty ready to pull out of there by night. That fire was too close for comfort and every once in a while a piece of hot ash would drop out of the sky and go down your neck. The crew went ahead while Lee and I went to leave our extra dynamite and caps at the powder cache. You can't bring that stuff close to a town. When we got back down the bayou to the houseboat it was dark and the sky was an ugly red from the river all around behind the settlement. It looked bad for all of us. If it rained and put the fire out we were whipped, and if it didn't, the fire had us whipped. Our jobs were gone and I was broke, either way. Then if that wasn't bad enough the sheriff came over.

"Mr. Leblanc is conscious now," he said. "He believes he can identify the man. Says it's one of you boys. All of you come with me." Struck dumb we were all staring at one another. Then we got into the boats and went over.

THE old man was sitting up in a chair with a blanket across his knees. His sharp old eyes were searching as they peered out from under his heavy white brows like glowing coals, merely grunting as we walked past. Then we were all by except Drake and Cole and Joe. They went in together. We sat around there on the porch silent and wondering which one it was. I thought they'd never come out and when they did I almost dropped my teeth. The sheriff had Joe by the arm leading him off to jail. I just groaned. Everything depended on Joe. Everything.

He couldn't have done it. He couldn't have started one of those air-boats without waking up the whole crew. Then I remembered how we had poled it down the bayou that night. He could have done that or walked around maybe, for his boots had been wet. He might be giving us all the double cross. Or would he? It got me. I couldn't figure it out. Drake was almost crying and I felt sorry for him for the first time. Then I got mad. Everything I had depended on this job and I had to trust Joe. Hell, he was straight. I knew it.

"Listen, you cats," I said. "Let's go get Joe out of jail. He didn't rob the old man and we all know it, whether that dumb sheriff does or not." We didn't stop to think. We just acted.

Down that short street we went. Grouped together like a buzzing bunch of mad bumblebees. We stopped in front of the little old shanty jail and Joe and the sheriff were coming out. Joe saw right off what was up.

"Now boys," he cautioned. "Take it easy. The sheriff is going to let me make bail until the job is finished. Let's get to bed." How he'd made bail I didn't stop to think. We could face that charge when the job was done.

The next morning the fire was worse and Joe was undecided about taking us out. He was afraid we might get trapped. We just had one line to shoot, but it was across the back of the square about a mile and a half in the swamp behind the settlement. Drake moaned so much that we finally started.

We didn't get far, though. That smoke was so thick and the fire so close we couldn't get in there and we had to come back to the boat. The whole lake was hemmed in by fire now. The heat was intense and ashes were falling all over everything. We had to get the equipment over to the settlement. But the fire was close, even there. A strong breeze was springing up, pushing the fire in closer. Then Joe got an idea.

"I'm going after the dynamite," he said suddenly. "We can kill two birds with one shot. It's our only chance." Then he climbed into the air-boat. I wasn't letting him go alone, so I jumped in too. Drake was going nuts.

"Where are you two going?" he yelled.

"After the powder," Joe hollered above the roar of the boat.

"You fool," screamed Drake, jerking off his glasses. "You can't bring that powder in here close to town. They'll sue the company. Let it go and get this equipment out of here. If you even start for that powder I'll get you fired."

Joe hadn't ever directly disobeyed Drake's orders for, after all, he was the

boss and this was his responsibility. Joe had to make his choice of a try and disobeying direct orders or take it laying down. If he disobeyed Drake and failed he knew he'd never get another job. The company would blackball him with everyone on the lot. Now he was fighting for his job. Maybe his life. Joe don't take things laying down. Mad and disgusted, he just looked at Drake.

"Shut your big crying mouth and get those boats out of that bayou and over to the settlement," he yelled. "Maybe we can save it and our jobs at the same time. There's women and kids there. They got a right to a chance. Now come on, you cats. Get things over and set up for a refraction shot. Cole, I'm depending on you and Lee. We'll blow out the neck back of the settlement to stop the fire and take a recording of the blast like we were taking an ordinary refraction shot. That's our only chance. Now hit it." Sure, that would do it. We all saw he was right.

Joe shot the gas to the air-boat. It roared into that smoke-choked swamp, jumping logs and cypress knees like a scared rabbit. The prop dragged all the smoke right to us. Our eyes were swollen and red when we reached the dynamite cache. The heat was a breath off of hell. Soaking a blanket in mud and water, I slapped it around a box of blasting caps. If those nasty little things blew, the whole fifteen hundred pounds of dynamite would go.

Joe was stacking boxes of powder into the boat. Sparks and coals of fire were dropping all over us. That powder will burn without going off — most of the time. But those blasting caps are touchy as hell, and they were stacked right beside all that powder. When a palmetto clump burst into flame like a pistol shot or a big tree crashed down in the swamp behind, I all but jumped out of my skin.

Working fast but steady, Joe didn't pay it any mind. Now we were loaded and Joe gunned her. The boat had seven hundred pounds of sudden death in it, but he didn't seem to know it. Bumps, stumps, logs, the boat took them in her stride, leaving behind a big blast of spray. Then a top fire started with a wild roar above that of the boat. Those old moss-hung trees were bursting into flame like cannon shot.

The swamp was crawling with animals. Heavy fat moccasins ran along beside frightened rabbits and rats by the thousands. Once a doe and her fawn flashed by like frightened shadows, their big eyes luminous with fear. Then we heard a big blast. The powder cache was gone. We weren't out of there a minute too soon.

"Riley Grannan's Last Adventure"

It is available again. With requests coming in almost every week, although it has not been advertised for years, and with our own supply down to a single copy, ADVENTURE has ordered a large reprint of this famous booklet. The price is ten cents.

This is the classic of funeral sermons—the sermon delivered in a burlesque theater in Rawhide, Nevada, by Herman W. Knickerbocker, the busted preacher-prospector, over the body of Riley Grannan, the dead-broke gambler.

Adventure
205 East 42nd Street
New York, N. Y.

Please send me_____copies of "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure."
I am enclosing_____cents. (10c in stamps or coin for each copy desired.)

Name

Street Address

City or Town State

Now we burst out into the lake, zooming around the neck. Those boys were doodlebuggers from the word go. They were ready. We slammed half up the shore and started planting that dynamite. The heat was a blowtorch blast that seared our skin, and hot ashes and sparks fell all around us. We ripped into that dynamite and tore it out of the boxes—Joe capping and tying in the cap wires to the electric blaster cable. Then here came Drake looking wild as a bobcat. He jumped into that dynamite and packed it around like he'd done it all his life.

SPARKS and ashes were like a shower off the cauldron of hell. If one of those sparks fell on a dynamite cap just right, they'd never find even little pieces of us. Seven hundred pounds of dynamite will about level a city block. It seemed a thousand years, but we had it planted finally and were back at the observer's boat. Joe was carefully checking over the instruments. This shot had to be right. It was our only chance. It meant all or nothing, for the rain was beginning to come, a few drops now and then. But we couldn't wait on it, for the fire was too close. Joe finished checking the instruments.

"Thanks, Cole," he said. "I'll take the responsibility for this shot," and he was calling Lee on the short wave.

"O.K. I'm ready," Lee's metallic voice whipped back.

"Shoot the shot!" Joe yelled.

That ground got up on its hind legs and came walking toward us like a drunk doodlebugger. The roar was like the crack of doom on judgment day. Those giant swamp trees seemed to rise up in the air and go to pieces. A tidal wave jumped out of the hole and rolled across the lake and back in time to wash the fallen trash out of the new channel. At least the settlement and our equipment were safe, job or no.

Inside the observer's darkroom Joe was developing his record. We held our breath until he kicked the door open and spread it out. If this wasn't a good shot, we were sunk. Joe looked at the record a full minute without saying anything, and then he folded it and handed it to Drake.

"I guess that's as good as anybody could do, boys," was all he said. "Pick 'em up. We got our information." We gave a wild whoop of joy and picked up our instruments. It was raining harder and we all met at Fat Tony's. Everyone was there, including the sheriff.

"All right, Joe," he said. "I've kept my bargain. Point him out."

Joe pointed at Cole. "There's your man, Sheriff," he said.

Cole looked at them through slitted malevolent eyes. "What is this?" he demanded ominously. "You haven't got anything on me."

The sheriff looked sorry for him. "I'm afraid we have, son," he said. "Even the smartest guys slip somewhere." Then he was snapping the cuffs on Cole and leading him out. Mouth hanging open, Drake just stared like the rest of us.

"What? Why—" he stammered. "I thought you—"

"Well, Drake," Joe grinned. "I guess I do owe you an explanation. You see, the night Burrhead and I went after the money, somebody shot at us but we didn't tell anyone. Then the next morning on the way to work I dug the bullet out of the boat. When you and the sheriff said Mr. Leblanc had been robbed and took me in, I got the sheriff aside and gave him the bullet. He found it was a 25.30 caliber. That crazy Jules is the only one around here with a gun like that.

"Cole was supposed to be fishing with him that day because he wouldn't go after the money with me. Then I remembered asking Tony how much fish they'd caught, thinking we might get some for our cook. Tony said none, he guessed, because they'd bought what they were eating from him. They didn't catch any fish because they didn't go fishing," Joe said, stopping to light a cigarette. Then he went on.

"Then I was beginning to get the drift about Cole. When I thought how he's always going around in one of those tricky pirogues, I realized he had to be the one to wear my cowboy boots. He got them wet when he got in and out of the pirogue on the lakeshore, for he

didn't dare use the dock and chance being seen. That pirogue is the only way it could be done and he's the only one who knows how to handle one."

Drake scratched his head. "But that's not proof enough, is it?" he asked.

Joe blew out a cloud of smoke. "Maybe not," he agreed. "But it happens that Jules is mortally scared of the sheriff and when he threatened to put him in jail he talked. Cole had promised him a trip to Canada, where everyone spoke French, if he would help him delay us. The poor simple-minded kid was all for it because it was like a game to him. Cole gave him the money to hide, but he wasn't after that eight hundred dollars. He was after a million dollars. The lease on the old man's land. When we got the first lead pointing right toward it, that's all he needed. The shooting and the robbery and the fire were just to cause trouble and delay us until our option ran out. He bought one from the old man that's good the minute ours expires.

"I explained what I believed to the sheriff, and he thought so too. Then we framed it with the old man about the identifying stuff to make Cole show his hand. But if he didn't the old man was to say I did it so Cole would think he was safe. When he didn't show, I got the sheriff to wait until we got all the seismographical data we could. Knowing Cole wanted to know the exact location of that dome as much as we did, I felt sure he would take all the records right. But I couldn't take a chance on him ruining that last shot, so I took it."

Drake was flabbergasted. "Well, I'll be damned," he said, and everyone jumped like they were bee-stung at Drake cussing. Seeing him like a new man—his clothes were burned and muddy, his face was pot black and gaunt as a wolf's.

Joe stuck out his hand. "Drake, I had you wrong. You're a real doodlebugger."

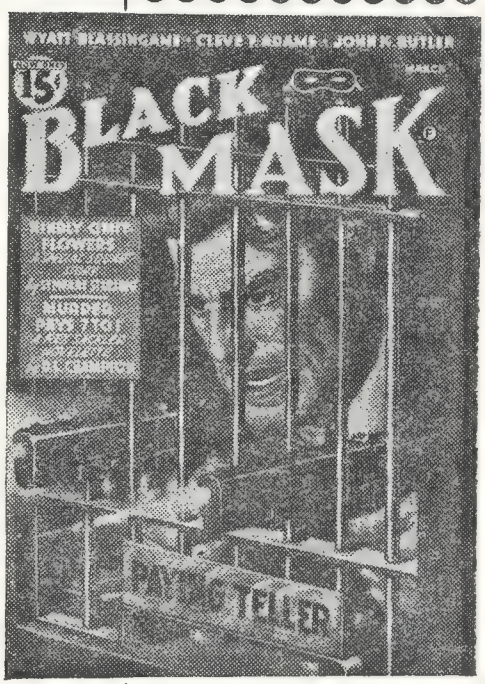
Drake grabbed Joe's hand, grinning like an ape. "Let's get a drink," he said. "By God, we both need one."

That was too much. I just took my drink at a gulp and passed out cold.

BLIND DATE WITH DEATH

That's what Sergeant Helen Dixon of the Policewomen's Bureau kept—when she was assigned to the case of the phoney matrimonial mart that served as a cloak for the nastiest murder ring that had circled the city in years. *Kindly Omit Flowers* is the latest in STEWART STERLING'S series of authentic "Special Squad" novelettes concerning the N. Y. P. D.

D. L. CHAMPION brings back Rex Sackler to demonstrate how *Murder Pays 7 to 1*—although it looks for a while as if the penny-pinching dick is going to get badly squeezed himself when he accepts a case, without a retainer, in which he contracts to solve a murder that hasn't yet been committed —and the only possible suspect has not one but *two* perfect alibis. Then there's a Rod Case novelette by JOHN K. BUTLER; a Canavan and Kleinschmidt novelette by CLEVE F. ADAMS; and a Bishop novelette by WYATT BLASSINGAME — all murder mysteries with a punch! This big MARCH issue of BLACK MASK is on sale NOW!



LIVE BY THE SWORD

A TALE OF THE BORGIAS

By F. R. BUCKLEY

Synopsis:

JUNE, 1497—and I, GASPARE TORELLA, stalked the streets of Rome, possessed only of a sword, the clothes I stood up in, and my degree as a physician—valuable in that order. I had fled Spain in haste—after healing a Marquis till his teeth fell out—and was now trying to earn my bread by telling fortunes in a pothouse. Then, suddenly, a cry in the night and I was out in a dark alley—to find a man's life ebbing away on the cobbled stones. Before I could aid him, I was seized by two bravos, and they, warning me not to meddle, showed me a grim example: the victim's tongue nailed to a door. Then, revealing they were in the Cardinal's service, and he being in need of a doctor, they decided to take me to him. Thus was I brought to a villa above Rome where, not having eaten for many days, I lost consciousness.

I came to in the arms of a plump matron, at a table set for supper—and found myself in the midst of the Borgia family circle. Here were the gorgeous Pope's three sons: the dissolute JUAN, DUKE OF GANDIA, who was extremely drunk; GIUFFREDO BORGIA, weak and effeminate; and CESARE, the CARDINAL, cold, heartless and brilliant.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CLYMER

Their sovereign lady, while they milled about the dead carts . . . .

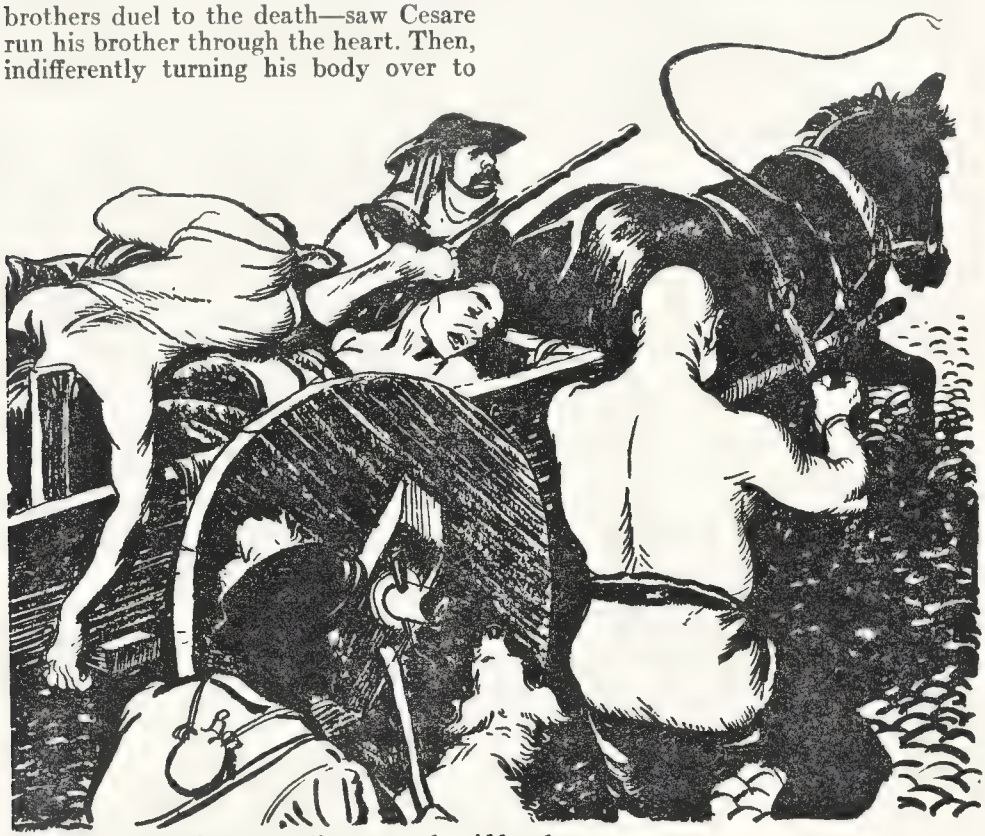
The lady was their peasant mother, VANOZZA DE CATANEI. But though they had honors of the Church, three kingdoms and an empire upon them, these Borgias were quarreling like fishhawkers—only Cesare, the Cardinal, acting worthy of his rank. And he, having approved me with his cold blue eyes, pronounced me in his service as personal physician.

Suddenly, the mortal hatred between him and his elder brother flared into violence. Juan, enraged when Cesare taunted him as a profligate and incompetent, plunged a table knife into his breast—and Cesare was saved only by the corselet he wore. With deadly intent now, Cesare forced Juan to ride with him toward Rome, myself and his two bravos in attendance. When they paused in a moonlit square, Juan, sensing impending doom, cried out, "Murder!" But Cesare, implacable, ordered him to defend himself with his sword, and he who fell in combat to be dropped into the Tiber and so keep the truth from their father. Cold with horror, I watched the brothers duel to the death—saw Cesare run his brother through the heart. Then, indifferently turning his body over to the bravos, Cesare rode to the Vatican.

Here, this man, whom I looked on as a murderer, took me into his confidence. He had killed his brother in self-defense lest Juan stab *him* one day; in his place, he would unify an unhappy, divided Italy, cure her of the petty tyrants who oppressed the people, and make her strong against the French menace. A chill ran up my spine as he revealed his ambition: *AVT CAESAR AVT NIHIL* —Caesar or nothing! That night, we heard the Pope's roar of anguish across the courtyard and knew that his son's body had been found.

PART II

NOW here am I—as historian —in difficulty. 'Twas as physician I attended His Holiness Alexander VI; and as physician I am bound by the oath of Hippocrates never to divulge what may pass between me and a patient. It will be found that whatever else I may tell



. . . . commanded them to disperse or be ridden down.

of Cesare Borgia, no word concerning his maladies or suchlike will pass my pen. Of His Holiness, whom (except once) I saw only as a doctor. I can similarly say nothing, save that his grief, as I had heard in Cesare's library, was terrible indeed. It hath come out in other histories —it seems, forsooth, that yon sneaking Burchard kept a diary—that for three days (during which time I was continually in attendance on him) His Holiness would touch no food, but wept constantly; that he said over and over again that he would give seven Tiaras, and willingly, if his son could be restored to him alive; that—despite the remonstrances of Cesare—he accused himself before the whole Conclave of Cardinals of divers faults and derelictions, promising a reform of the whole Church. It hath been said that from that morning until the Duke of Gandia was laid in his tomb, the Holy Father was like a man demented.

As to this, I can (as above) say nothing, though of the late Duke, who was no patient of mine, I may remark that when I viewed his body I gained the impression that he had been butchered like a pig. Many years later I learned that in some idle moment he had seduced Michele's sister—he had a taste for the commonalty. And that is why he was mutilated just as he was.

Curious.

Neither the brother nor the father of the lamented viewed the body, His Holiness on my advice, Cesare because he was opposed to such heathenry.

"Let me remember him," he said to two other Cardinals (one of them Ascanio Sforza, who was under suspicion of the slaying) "let me remember him as I saw him last—merry and full of life and mischief—my brother—"

I—even I—would have sworn he sobbed on the word; anyone but I, who rode beside him, would have taken oath that he was stunned with grief as we crossed the bridge of Sant' Angelo on the funeral procession to Santa Maria.

Even at that distance, through the hot, still air, we could hear the bellowing lamentations of the Pope. The corpse was borne before us on a bier covered with brocade, the face showing. Giovanni had been stripped of his mud-soaked, blood-soaked clothing and dressed in the uniform of Captain-General—it showed in the gorgeous collar and the golden galoons on his arms so piously folded.

And it was of these vanities that Cesare was speaking to me—just as a fat woman at the corner of the bridge cried out: "Alack, his poor brother! The poor Cardinal! May God comfort Your Eminence!"

"That uniform," the poor Cardinal was saying, "will become me better than ever it did him, Gaspare. Not so?"

While my mind struggled with my heart for a proper reply, he regarded me sidewise. Had we not been at a funeral, or had none been by to see, I think he would have been smiling.

Maliciously. . . .

"But as regards thyself," says he in a low voice, as we came to the steps before the church, "I hear there's a plot to abduct and torture thee, to find out whether thou knowest anything of this affair. How thinkest thou of *that,* Gaspare?"

CHAPTER VI

POISONER!

IT WAS now, during the summer, autumn and winter of 1497, that I wrote the book over which so many learned asses have been braying ever since—*De Morbo Francorum et de Operationibus Mercurii*—which neverthless, some day, shall be an enlightenment to the world.

Those were the happiest months I have had with it so far, with none to contradict me or even quarrel with my Latin.

I was on a farm in the hills near Arezzo, and the nearest thing to a doctor within forty miles of me, was a swineherd who also gelded bulls; he was, even so, a better hand with the knife than some of my learned detractors—I name no names. Are they not my brothers in the healing art? Have they not treated me as a brother—much as Cesare Borgia treated *his* brother, save that their stabbing has been in the back with words, rather than with steel in the bosom?

'Twas of course this business of the

Duke's murder which had sent me into hiding; for it soon appeared that the tale Cesare had heard, of threats to abduct and question me under torment, were less than the truth. That slimy German master of the ceremonies, Burchard, had had his suspicions. Not daring to voice them against Cesare, whom he hated, he had hinted them to the Holy Father concerning me. And the Pope, in the extremity of his anguish for his dead son, had already issued orders for my arrest. Not for confinement in the Castel Sant' Angelo, either, but in the Tor di Nona, whose back door (according to the Roman proverb) opened on heaven.

When we returned from the burying, Michele the bravo was awaiting us, with news that the officers were already on the way.

"Hell's flames!" says Cesare, yet coolly. "Curse it! I'd meant to take thee to Naples, Gaspare, but I may not leave till this old fool's comforted, and— Pity my mother's ill; she's the only one that can do aught with him. I cannot keep thee close here for months on end—nay, I have it. Michele! Thou knowest where my old nurse lives?"

"Yes, Your Eminence."

Cesare opened a drawer of his table, took out a bag of gold and threw it across to me.

"Go down the back stairs, get a horse from the stable and take him there to Arezzo at once," says he to Michele. "Leave Rome by the Naples road, and come back the same way. Look not so glum, doctor! Thou'lt see me again."

Aye—that was all he could conceive as a reason for glumness: the prospect of being parted from him and his brilliant destiny. Whereas—

But no matter my reasons; this is not my story, but his. Suffice it that on a summer day in 1498—it was the last of August, to the best of my memory—I had quite forgot him and his great plans for remaking of the world (with murder for a first step); had almost forgotten my four days as physician to the mighty, and was happier than ever I had been, attending the local hinds when they cut themselves with their sickles, and their womenfolk whenas they increased the number of sturdy little mountaineers. I learned a great deal from the midwives—so much, that by this time, having come to trust me, they would oft leave a case in my hands alone. From them also I had learned how a certain herb that grows flat on the ground, in swamps, will cure stiffness of the joints; which of course itself originates in swampy places; *similia similibus curantur;* behold the works of God! Also that roots of the common fox-glove, boiled, will relieve the dropsy following afflictions of the heart; the philosophy of which is not so clear, but the effect is certain.

Also, I had finished my book; I could have no notion (being young) of the maledictions with which it would be received. And—the farmer had a daughter, whose name I now forget.

Margherita, was it? Bianca?

No matter. . . .

I HAD been out with her all day, wandering the sunlit hills in search of herbs. It was now late afternoon and we were strolling homeward hand in hand, laughing and singing some old tirelay of the mountains—when from afar I saw a stranger leaning on the fence that divided the cow-byres from the meadow. Even at that distance, it was evident that he was no native of the district—I knew that both by the fact that he was wearing a hat, and that, seeing us, he placed one hand on the top of the fence and vaulted over; no mountaineer would have wasted the energy.

And this was a bearded man; an auburn beard he had, trimmed in the French fashion, and now split by white teeth as he approached us smiling.

There was something familiar about the swing of his step, the motion of his shoulders—I seemed to recognize, with a chilling of the spirit, the movement with which he pointed his walking-cane at a flower and then slashed off its blossom with a back-handed cut. Aye, for all the beard and the feather in his cap, it was Cesare Borgia!

"Well, Gaspare," says he, as if we had parted yesterday. And he turned on my companion a look which made her put her hand to her bodice.

"Your Eminence!" says I, wondering whether or not to kneel on the grass.

He put out his hand and stopped me, still looking boldly at the girl.

"No longer 'Your Eminence'," says he. "The Church is having to get along without me these days, Gaspare. As best she can. I have renounced the purple. No vacation, alas! Who's this pretty maid? I hope thou'rt not married, Gaspare?"

"No-no, my lord."

"No children either? That's well. I would not break up families. Well," —and he chucked the girl under the chin—"be off now, sweeting. The doctor and I have matters to discuss."

Scarlet in the face, the poor wench bobbed him a reverence and ran for the house as if the devil were after her.

"Thick ankles," says Cesare. "Heigho! What's perfect in this world? Certainly not thy Latin, Gaspare. We must have it corrected before thy book goes to the printers."

I blushed as furiously as the wench had done.

"Has Your Honor—"

"Oh, aye, I've read it. And amused myself this cursed long afternoon, saving thee the trouble of dedicating it to me. I've the paper somewhere—ah! 'To His Most Gracious and Illustrious Lordship, Cesare Borgia de France, by God's Grace Duke of Valentinois—'"

"Duke of Val—"

Cesare laughed and refolded the paper.

"Yes, Gaspare. Valentinois in France. That's why I've come for thee. His Most Christian Majesty hath made me a Duke (being bullied, bedeviled and blackmailed thereunto by my father) and we're off to France to marry His Majesty's cousin. Or aunt, or some such lady—the matter's not quite decided."

"*We*, Sire?"

"The 'we' is royal—perhaps a little in advance," says Cesare, laughing, "but better too early than too late. But after reading yon book of thine, I'd be terrified to wed without medical advice. Mistake me not; I mean—there was some talk of my wedding down there in Naples, and that bastard Federigo tried to poison me. After I'd put the sacred crown on his head, too!"

"Poison Your Lordship? But why?"

"Why's a long story, and little to the point. *How* is what I'd like to learn. Know'st anything about poisons, Gaspare?"

"Some little, Your Honor. Most medicines are poisons, if ill-used. But—"

"Better learn more. Tho' I hear 'tis mostly steel they rely on in France, and I can deal with that myself. M'yes. Strange that medicines should be poisons too."

HE FLICKED the head off another meadow flower, and hastened his pace toward the farm-yard. I could see now that on the other side of the house, an escort of some dozen mounted men was scattered, its horses grazing; and in one hulking figure I recognized the bravo Jacopo.

He seemed direly out of tune with the green trees, the singing birds, the clean air of the place. My heart sank as I recalled the stinks of Rome, the thick, dead air of that street where Juan Borgia had been slain while the moon leered—aye, my heart sank.

"Up, men! Boot and saddle," calls Jacopo.

"I've had thy things packed," says Cesare, "they're in a valise on thy new horse. Am I not a particular good lord to thee, Gaspare? And there is better to come."

"Am I not—"

"What?"

"My lord, am I not still in peril in that matter of the Duke's death?"

"That? Oh, nay. The Holy Father knows all about yonder business now."

My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth.

"While I was at Naples, I heard that he had fastened guilt on my other brother, Giuffredo. The youngster, thou know'st—thought he'd been avenging his wife. So I came back post-haste and told him the truth, and my reasons."

I stood there by my stirrup, looking up at him, speechless.

"Come," says Cesare, irritably, "mount, mount! We must not be benighted in these hills—no time to lose. Be not afraid, lad. Thy skirts are clear.

So are mine. My father knows better than to weep too long over spilt—milk. Better than thou dost, seemingly."

The escort was forming into ranks; its men, I saw by the escutcheons on their breasts, were cavalrymen of the

Scarlet in the face, the wench bobbed him a reverence and ran for the house as if the devil were after her.

Papal Guard. I was pulling my horse to position some few paces behind his lordship, when Cesare leaned forward, grasped my bridle and drew me level with himself.

"I come to fetch thee, and thou'd leave me to ride by myself, mumchance?" said he, and shifted his hand to my wrist. A surge of—of whatever it is, that invisible essence of a leader —seemed to fly from my pulse to my heart. He smiled, warmly as only he knew how. "Believe me or believe me not—all these months I have been strangely lonely for thee, Gaspare, thou fool."

Aye, aye, we rode down the slope from the farm-house; and Jacopo said that, under favor, the little wench was waving her hand after us.

But I did not look back.

WE SAILED from Ostia on the first day of October; and only then (having passed the meantime mostly in printers' shops, correcting their errors in my precious book) did I realize into what magnificence my fate had led me—enough on't, in this wedding-party alone, to overflow three ships and five galleys sent for us by His Majesty of France.

We had on board (in addition to our Duke, the center of all the pother) a dispensation for the remarriage of the French King, and a Cardinal's hat for one of his favorite Bishops. And to aid us in the carrying of these things, we had a hundred picked men in red and gold brocade; God knoweth how many horses, sumpter mules and gilt carts; and among those who lay with their faces on the deck-boards, moaning, as we made the rough crossing to Marsiglia, were some thirty of the noblest youths of Rome.

We landed at Marseille, as the French call it, after ten days; burning a ropewalk to make a place for our landing, paying the owner ten times what his rubbish had been worth; and thereafter winding our way, like a jewelled snake, up the banks of the Rhone River to Chinon, where the King was.

I had thought that speed would be the order of our progress; speed to the wedding, speed to the alliance with Louis XII; speed to the conquest of Milan and speed onward with the other great schemes of which Cesare had talked with me on the voyage.

Thanks to great draughts of bitter herbs, which I had had foresight to bring aboard with me, I had not been seasick. Nor had the Duke, seeming to be above human weakness in this respect as in so many others. And it had been his habit to sit with me on the poop-deck in the evenings, talking of his future as the sun went down.

We were protected from the elements by an awning of blue velvet, sown on its underside with gold stars, and when the wind would threaten to tear this from its lashings, the Duke would send for six servants to stand perilously by the bulwarks and hold it in place with their hands. One of these, but for the grace of God and my seizing him by the tunic, would have gone overboard; none of them, after an hour of that duty, could raise his hands above his head for a day or so, because of the stiffening of the tendons.

"Well?" said the Duke in Spanish, one evening as I sat staring at these unhappy men. "What's in thy mind, Gaspare?"

"Nothing, Your Grace."

"Come, come, speak freely. Dost not know yet, that's what thou'rt here for? Damn thy hell-brews and lancet-work—who needs 'em? Company's what I'm after. Go on. Speak."

"I should have thought," says I, smarting under his rebuke to my science, "that with so many noble gentlemen aboard—"

"I cannot talk to them," says Cesare, as though explaining something to a child, "because they are too near my equals. On the other hand, I cannot talk to—yon steersman, for instance—because he would not know whereof I spoke. Being a doctor, thou'rt high enough to understand me, yet low enough to have thy throat cut without fuss, shouldst thou—inconvenience me. This business—"

"Yet Your Grace would have me speak frankly about this torturing of the servants!"

"—this business of world-saving is

lonely work," says Cesare, fixing his blue eyes on me. "I've taken a fancy to thee, and besides thou knowest too much to be left roaming at large. I have but one confidant beside, Gaspare: a painter from Florence; Leonardo—a lawyer's bye-blow; calls himself da Vinci. Hast heard of him?"

"Nay, Sire."

"Like thee, he's neither too high nor too low, and I can talk with him; or rather, throw my thoughts against him and see how they bounce. Like tennis . . . So the plight of these awning-holders disturbs thee?"

"Your Highness was to make a better Italy for common folk—such as these—if I understood Your Grace."

"Leave the titles—save in company, of course. Look you, Gaspare: what I promised, I mean to do. Thou'lt live to hear every peasant from Sicily to the Alps—and further—calling me the best lord ever he had. But one cannot make omelets without breaking eggs; and to gain such lordship, I must conquer Milan. To gain Milan, I must use the French; and to use the French, I must show them that I stand in no need of their aid."

I STILL looked at the straining servants, but still dared say no more.

"What use hath been the agony of these poor wretches, sayst thou? Look, Gaspare: the man who hath no regard for human life shall ever prevail over him who hath scruples. This French king is a chicken-hearted fool and a pinch-penny; when he hears of tricks like this, and certain others I have in mind for his astonishment, he'll think he's entertaining the devil. And however much men rail at Satan, Gaspare, they give him better bargains than they give their God."

"So these poor fellows—"

"They serve their kind," says the Duke, looking about him. "Ah—see—the birds! We must be nearing land. And the sunset—red and gold; our colors; auspicious. Ah, we'll show these Frenchmen a gallantry-show, Gaspare *mio!*"

So that was why we burned the ropeyard—and paid five hundred ducats for it; that was why we took our time over the journey; that was why we stayed at Aix and at Avignon for days on end—dawdling, as actors do, to raise the expectation of the audience. So also 'twas to impress an audience (and not for the vindication of morality) that Cesare stabbed with his own hand one of our men that had mauled a French girl in some village; and it was for show, and not for charity, that our mules entering Chinon were loose-shod with golden shoes, which they cast for the benefit of the populace.

And the play-acting had its effect. King Louis met us at Chinon bridge with his Most Christian eyes bulging at this most pagan splendor; and though Cesare knelt then and there (on a gold cushion laid down by two pages) and did His Majesty homage for his Duchy, there was no doubt thenceforth which of them was master and which man.

I laugh now when I remember how terrified was Louis when the bride-elect, the lady Carlotta of Aragon, having met Cesare, refused forthright to wed him. As I have said, the Duke was a handsome man—others have said, the handsomest in Italy—but, for reasons my profession forbids me to give, he was not looking his best that autumn. He—but no matter; the lady would have none of him.

I chanced to be in the cabinet when King Louis came to tell him the bad news. He came by night, without even a taper-bearer, and 'twas evident the poor man was afraid.

"So? Why not?" asks my Duke, when his sovereign had stammered forth the girl's unwillingness.

He knew—I mean, Cesare knew. Was I not at that moment making up a cosmetic plaster for his complexion? But by this time aware of his subtleties, I perceived that he was asking in order to embarrass the French king, who would not for his life have told him the true reason.

"There may be—may be some gentleman at court—" says he, looking at my master like a beaten dog.

"Who hath taken the girl's eye, ye mean? Oons! And if so, is majesty to be

flouted thus? If 'tis thus indeed, let us beware of it, and I'll have Gaspare poison the fellow, or suchlike."

At this, even I started violently in my skin; but then I saw—'twas but a little more of the play-acting.

"My lord!" cries the King in panic, "for God's sake! The lady's father is King of Naples!"

"I should know—I put the crown on his head," says Cesare shortly. "And may take it off again, yet. *His* daughter, forsooth! But see: we have no time to waste with her whimsies—Lodovico Sforza may be making an alliance with the Florentines while we fool about here—or with the Venetians, and then where shall be Your Majesty's lordship of Milan? If Carlotta's blind to her advantage, let's find someone who is not. But above all, let's begone to Italy and proceed with our affairs."

"There is the Countess of Foix—" says Louis, hesitant.

"Too old, too ugly, and too poor. A countess!" says my Duke with scorn.

I KNEW on whom he'd set his fancy: a child of seventeen, and very beautiful—Charlotte d'Albret, the sister of the King of Navarre. She had been brought up in piety, poor child, and was continuing in the same in the train of Anne of Brittany, whom the King wished to wed. Louis too knew of my lord's predilection, and, though he had not my reasons for pitying the girl, was loath to such a union.

"If I myself were but wed—" he whined, meaning that perchance his queen could command her maid of honor.

Cesare shrugged.

"Ah, yes. But the dispensation is not yet granted, as thou knowest," says he, quite as though he had it not at that moment in the desk at which he sate, "and I fear my father may not be pleased at all this dilly-dallying."

Louis' mouth fell open.

"Not granted?" says he, all dismayed. "But the Bishop of Ceuta told me—"

Once more I saw that terrible flash of ice-fire in my master's eyes. Once more, in an instant it was gone.

"The Bishop of Ceuta told thee otherwise?" says Cesare smoothly. "He was mistaken, Your Majesty. So. I regret—"

He spread his hands and seemed to stifle a yawn; but when the King was gone, he was wide awake again, for all that he tried to seem drowsy as he came over to my plaster-table.

"Will that make me beautiful?" says he, looking down at my pot of pink paste.

"I trust so, Sire."

"Heigho! Marriage is a weary business, though Charlotte should make it more amusing than Carlotta. Tell me, Gaspare, this mercury of thine—how if one should eat it, like other medicines?"

I dropped my spatula.

"God forbid, Your Highness! Never do so. In my book I expressly warn against it, as also against—"

"The too liberal use of inunction. But why?"

"Why, Sire, 'tis a poison."

"Quick?"

"Quick or slow, according to the amount taken. But I beseech Your—"

Cesare flapped his hand at me.

"Is that why thy Marquis in Spain was so ungrateful?" he asked, thus striking me dumb. "Never fear, Gaspare, I'll not try to be mine own physician. With a pretty wife to keep me in love with living—or at least, to set forward my plans—"

"His Majesty seemed unwilling," says I, seeking some little revenge for that jest about the Marquis.

"His Majesty," says Cesare, "hath the misfortune really to *desire* a woman. Ah yes! A very lovely widow she is too—as I shall remind him tomorrow."

He reached into his desk and drew forth the dispensation; stood there, tapping his chin with the parchment and smiling.

Suddenly he burst into a laugh.

"We have a hold on His Majesty's finer feelings," he said, striking the document on his hand. "I think we shall marry the Lady Charlotte, Gaspare."

And so we—he—did, in May; and lived with her (paying far less attention to his honeymoon than to the arming of the expedition against Milan) until September of that year 1499; bade her

good-bye with the cold hope that her child would be a boy; and on the tenth of that month, behold us ready to march.

The evening before, my lord Duke did me the honor to visit my little room in the north tower of the castle—we were at Loches now, and he had never been in this tiny round chamber before. He came to bring me a sword, engraved according to his own style of fancy—*BEWARE THE HEALER,* it said on the blade, of course in Latin. He had theretofore advised me to dress soldier-fashion for the campaign, and I had gladly assented. I was a good swordsman (as I had proved too well in Spain) and—at twenty-seven, the dignity of a doctor can become wearisome.

I thanked him, and he sat on my bare table—all my belongings were stowed, ready for the morrow—and looked long and gravely at me.

"Aye, tomorrow begins our true career, Gaspare," he said. "We have come to the foot of the mountain; the path leads upward; we follow it. And woe betide any who get in our way!"

"And God save Your Lordship!"

He got off the table and dusted his hands.

"As to that—I think I can take care of myself," says he lazily. "Well—*hasta mañana,* Gaspare!"

"*Con Dios,* Your Excellency."

He went out, then, after a moment, returned and put his head round the doorpost.

"I had meant to tell thee. The Bishop of Ceuta. Who told the King the dispensation had already been granted, when—dost thou remember?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Poor man. Died tonight."

"*Died,* my lord?"

"M'yes. Not unexpectedly. 'A'd been ill all winter; started soon after he'd—been so indiscreet. Curious malady, face turned green; then 'a started to slobber and his teeth came loose in their sockets—"

I felt the hair rising on my head.

"Almost like thy Spanish Marquis, eh?" says my Lord Duke of Valentinois. "Poor Gaspare! Ha ha! Ha ha!"

His face vanished from the doorway, but I still stood staring wildly, hands clenched, while his laughter died away down the corridor.

CHAPTER VII

A SOLDIER IN THE RANKS

WHAT had made him tell me this terrible thing?

Was it an impulse of the moment? Nay—impulse was quite foreign to his nature. Never (I thought then, and still think) was there a man more coldly reasonable than Cesare Borgia.

Could it have been vanity? The urge to be admired—by poor me, and for this sordid triumph—he that was already the envy of a King, and whose vision embraced the lordship of all Italy and even more, as I even then suspected?

Impossible.

Remained there then but one explanation of his candor, and as, through that long night, I tossed on my hard bed or paced that little cell-like room, this explanation became even more certain and more terrible.

I was Cesare's servant. I had helped him to this dreadful crime—unwittingly, God knows, but I had helped him all the same. Now he had told me, bare-faced, of my complicity. I remembered that though he had seemed to turn back as an after-thought, his account of the Bishop's death had been glib and jesting as a *novello;* moreover, that though his lips had smiled, his eyes had not. Nay (I saw them now, in memory, better than in the flesh) those blue pupils had been watchful as a hawk's—watching to see how I should take the tidings.

The dawn was come. I stood looking out of my narrow window as the sunstruck spires of the poplars loomed out of the morning mist, and saw hell across the face of the countryside and myself in the midst of it, forever damned.

I was sure—sure as one is after sleepless nights, surer than I have been since—that 'twas for such work as this, that Cesare had recruited me. Even so long ago, he had foreseen his progress to the courts of the mighty, and among such folk, I well knew, poison was a common instrument. Must not he, with so much

of his way to make, have a poisoner in his train? And who so fit as I for the office—down-at-heel doctor, fugitive?

What should I do?

In those days, servants who had the secrets of their lords did not desert them and live long afterwards. I recalled how carelessly, under that starry awning on the ship, the Duke had told me I was high enough to understand him, yet low enough to have my throat cut. I saw the broad dark face of Michele the bravo —saw him reach toward his girdle for the knife—and flung myself down on my knees by my truckle-bed.

I was young—I loved life as God ordains young men shall until they've lived it; yet, when I arose, it was clear to me that I'd rather die than use my healing art for killing.

I would not have my throat cut, though.

We were going to war; I was going as a soldier. There would be no poisoning in the field, at all events. Perchance Cesare would fall in battle, perhaps myself.

Whichever—or whether or no—once I had mine own resolve taken, the rest was in the hand of God.

The trumpets were blowing in the courtyard.

I bathed my face, combed my hair and put on my new hat with the military feather; said farewell to that little room and went down the winding stone stairway quite cheerfully, considering.

In which frame of mind, sight of the Duke confirmed me. During the night-hours, it had seemed that His Grace of Valentinois, son of the Pontiff and cousin of Kings, had his mind given over entirely to spoiling my salvation; but in the morning sunlight, as he sat his gilt-clad horse in the midst of the milling throng of nobility, 'twas absurdly evident that I was the last thing in his thoughts.

I was not to ride in his company that day, but 'twas with abstraction that he told me so, and with irritation that he told me go ride where the devil I pleased.

All that long day and the next and the next, and in the evenings too, he was in close conference with King Louis. It was not until we reached Lyons, and were within four walls again, that I had further speech with him.

MEANTIME, reprieved from politics and poison, I had been consorting with the army which followed these politicians and poisoners. I had ridden its length, from the lances in the van to the artillery rumbling along, dismal yet deadly in the dust—and had felt more akin to the led than to the leaders.

The guns, of which King Louis had great store, took my interest least of all, ugly, lifeless things served by men ill-dressed, like weavers; criminals, most of them—let out of jail on condition they would work these brutal engines and take the risk of blinding and lopping if captured. Low-browed and blackened as they were, from the powder they must feed these cannon withal, it astonished me that the standard of Borgia (now quartered with the lilies of France) should float over such a horde of villains; for Cesare had demanded and obtained the office of Master of the Ordnance.

Though sure he was to be lord of the common people. . . .

The infantry was well enough, though even into its glittering ranks there had crept some alloy of fireworking. Some dozens of ranks would swing by in gold and scarlet, pikes and swords flashing in the sun—and then would come a row of dull fellows in blue and silver, carrying arquebuses. Since each of them needed a pikeman to protect him while he should set up his crutch and pour his powder and ram his bullet and wind his wheel and set his flint and what not—all for a shot that might well miss, and a bang that would scare no one but a child—I saw no sense in such, and rode mostly with the beautiful lances.

Their commander was Giangiacomo Trivulzio, a short, bearded man, noble but merry, and suffering—as had Cesare —from lack of low company. Seeing me skirting about his column, he roared to me to join him, and many an hour we passed in pleasant conversation.

The lances behind us numbered some thousand and a half, all gorgeously armored and mounted on fine horses; and of

course in the French service there were four men to the lance, which made a column of six thousand at our backs. The roar of them so close behind, even at a walk, thrilled every nerve in me, and when once (to change the pace of the horses) Giangiacomo ordered a mile at the trot, the waxing thunder of the advance went to my head like wine.

When we dropped back to the walk again, Trivulzio looked at me sidewise and laughed.

"Why, God's body!" says he. "What's the lad at? Weeping?"

"No," says I loudly, "but—"

He looked faraway.

"Ah!" he said, nodding. "I remember! When I was young and new. Noble feelings. Heroism. Ah! Heigho! Keep that as long as thou canst, lad. It's all horse-flesh and man-meat to me nowadays—and all a trot means is fear lest the last squadrons overrun the first. I hate this road-work; sooner fight any day, and devil a fight we'll get out of Milan."

"No fighting?"

"Oh, some little, maybe, but nothing for us. Skirmishes. Light horse. Always towns that hold out for their lord long after their lord's deserted them. But this Lodovico Sforza's got no friends, no allies and no bowels, and he'll run like a rabbit. So glum? Oons—hast thou been pining for glory, doctor?"

He called his lieutenant, to tell him how, not content with butchering in beds, I was fain to go murdering in meadows, and they bellowed with laughter till I left them. We were entering the city of Lyons at the time; we lay there that night, and toward twenty-four o'clock, Cesare sent for me.

He sent that old servant Pietro, whom I had first met in the Vatican, and who now gave me advice much as he had on that occasion.

"Under favor," says he, as we came to the Duke's door, "it would be well not to cross His Grace just now. His Majesty hath done enough of that . . . May it please Your Highness, the physician!"

Cesare did not tell me to be seated; he sat in a cross-legged chair and glared at me like the bull of his escutcheon.

"Well?" he demanded.

I HAD naught to say. But I confided myself, I remember, consciously to God—which at twenty-seven one does only in moments of grave peril.

"Well?" says His Grace more loudly, "is this how I'm to be treated for my condescension? Scorned in favor of the soldiery, ha? Why 'st thou not waited on me these days past?"

"It hath been the custom of Your Lordship to send for me," says I. Which angered him the more. Since I had in no way offended, but was serving as target for his rage against another, my best course would have been to stand silent. But I was young.

"Oho!" says Cesare. "So our attendance is to be begged, is it? Or are we a warrior now, and above such trifles as physic?"

There was no answering him now; I would as soon have bandied words with a tiger. He got up and paced about the room, the embodiment of fury. I soon saw why he was thus moved from his usual calm; nowadays, of course, I see more clearly than ever. When there was action to be taken, he was cool and collected; 'twas when he was withheld and frustrated that his bold spirit ate upon itself.

"I'm to stay here, am I," he muttered, "and doubtless *thou* thinkest to go junketing with the army to Milan. Ha!"

Next day, I was to learn from Giangiacomo, the inwardness of this. 'Twas that His Most Christian Majesty Louis XII had no taste for warfare; he would have his troops go ahead, and when Lodovico Sforza should indeed have run away, follow in dignity and safety. And in this staying behind, he was firm that my master should bear him company; he would not have Cesare Borgia outheroing him at the head of his own army—which Cesare had most precisely planned to do.

And would have done, had the Duchess Charlotte's dowry been paid over; but it had not, and my lord could not afford to lose it, and so for once a weak man had shackled a strong, albeit with chains of gold.

"I'm half minded," says my master,

halting a hand's touch from me and glaring into my face, "to let thee have a taste of camp and field—and soldier's pay, Master Torella—Doctor Lilyhand. How'd thou like it if I told thee to begone, then—leave thy pills and meet cannon-balls for a *soldo* a sennight? Eh?"

It was to be a man now—or a mouse. Or maybe a murderer.

"I should like it very well, Sire," I told him, terrified.

But he did not strike me; only looked hard into my face, nodded, and at last smiled. It was not a pretty smile.

"Ye would, eh?" says he. "Then we'll see. Which of us can do better without the other. Thou shalt march tomorrow, my military Gaspare, always remembering that this is not a dispensation of thee from my service—"

He sat down in his chair again, put his elbows on the arms thereof and grinned at me like Satan.

"—but as 'twere an education, for a wider usefulness. So if someone slay thee, Gaspare, call death thy teacher's fee. If not—perhaps thou'lt come to think worse of soldiering as a trade, and better of medicine."

"I think well of it now, Your Highness."

"*In all its branches?*" says he slowly. "Nay, I saw thy face when I told thee of the Bishop's—misfortune; think not otherwise. Well—fools must learn by experience; thou'rt an honest warrior now. Dismissed!"

I WENT to Giangiacomo Trivulzio and was received with scorn.

"*Thou* a lancer?" says he. "*Corpo di Bacco,* what's this bee in thy bonnet, doctor? Failed at the lesser bloodletting and want to try the greater? Bethink thee, is that reasonable?"

"I am a good swordsman," I told him, at which he made a rude noise.

"Swordsman! Since when hath swordsmanship had aught to do with war? Not since a man could be armored for fifty ducats. And am I to put fifty ducats' worth of plate on the like of thee? Soldiering nowadays is a trade to be learned, lad; my men were learning it when thou wast puzzling the difference between great A and a bull's foot. . . . If 'tis adventure thou'rt after, there's damned little of that since the guns came in."

"My lord Cesare hath never learned soldiering," says I, "yet he is captain of the gunnery."

"As to that," says Giangiacomo, laughing, "I'll make *thee* a captain, doctor—of the same kind. Ha ha! But to be a man-at-arms is another matter. And what's thy Duke say to this running off? Fine I should look—him with a bellyache next week, maybe, and me with his physician half way to Milan! Or art thou in disgrace, perhaps?"

"Nay. I—I am here by His Grace's order."

Trivulzio's smile vanished.

"Oh!" said he, and swallowed. "Oho! 'Twould have been as well to say so at first. H'm."

I saw him—poor man!—like so many others before and after him—racking his brains as he tried to fathom the mind of Cesare Borgia. This was indeed not one of the Duke's schemes, as I have shown, but such had become His Grace's repute already, that men were very chary of him. It had been noted at the French court, how suddenly the Pope had ceased the search for the slayer of his older son, and how quickly Cesare had renounced the purple. I—even I—had been asked with knowing smiles, when my master would be made Captain-General of the Church, in his brother's place; the courtiers had seen, no doubt on't, how His Grace had dominated His Majesty, and the coincidence had been noted, how the Bishop of Ceuta had offended him and died.

The fame he had begun to build with the burning of that rope-walk at Marseille had grown indeed. Now his name was spoken by the French—in their own country!—in low tones, and with glances over the shoulder. He was held in terror—at his own desire.

For, as he had said to me: men may promise by their hopes, but it is fear that governs their performance.

He had even Giangiacomo Trivulzio in fear; so much was evident from the blusterous way the captain said that,

Duke or no Duke, there was no place for me in his lances—but that I could ride with the light-armed troops of the advance-guard.

"If that's conformable to thine orders," he said, watching sharply to see whether I'd been ordered to spy on him.

When I said it was, he seemed very relieved—this grizzled veteran with a great King and a whole army at his back!—and sent me to a lieutenant of flying cavalry. We were to go ahead "pacifying the countryside" for the passage of the main forces; and in fact we rode out the next morning, in the dawn. Cesare had been in conclave with the King the night before, and unable to see me; he was still sleeping when I went, but I left my respectful duty to him in a note.

Down through Piedmont we went, in the shadow of the mountains, and the patient peasants raised heads for a moment to look at us, as their forefathers had looked at Hannibal and Caesar, and bent down again sure that whoever won whatever battle might be toward, it would still be their lot to scrabble in the earth.

THIS war of ours was to decide whether the Sforza or the Visconti should rule Milan. The Sforza had it now; King Louis claimed it because (he said) his grandmother had been of the Visconti, and the Sforze were usurpers. Really, of course, the case stood that he coveted the duchy and thought himself strong enough to take it; and he was right.

Yet the Duke Lodovico had some force; he had sent it forth to gain time while he begged alliance (in vain) from Venice. And so it came about that I fought in my first battle within twenty days of donning my first armor.

Why did I fight?

Why, because I was there and the enemy was yonder, and it was fight or be slain. As to the why of my being there at all, and how it came about that those horsemen crowning that hill were my mortal foes for the nonce, I had then no time to puzzle.

Nor have I found out since. . . .

At all events, they were ready for us when we came out of a valley-road into a little plain fit for cavalry-fighting. They had been hiding behind a hillock so that our outriders should not see them, and now came over the brow two hundred strong, to take us by surprise.

Which, but for a hidden strip of marshland between them and the road, they must have done, to our great discomfiture. But as it was, their front rank felt the hoofs of its horses sink into swamp that had seemed to be good firm meadow; their gallop was checked so that the second and succeeding ranks crashed into the leaders—and in a moment, all was confusion.

"Blow the trot!" yells our lieutenant in the French language, and the trumpet sounded, and we rode at quickened pace so far along the road, that at first I thought we were going to flee without fighting, and was sorry for't.

But no, it was just that our commander had seen the strip of swamp and had known on the instant how to turn it still further to his advantage. Coming to the end of it, he led us—still in route-order—sharply to the right, across firm ground to the rear of the enemy, and while they were still trying to extricate their ranks and turn and face us, he changed our front. He himself took our banner with the golden lilies and ordered the trumpeter to sound the charge.

"Montjoie Saint Denis!" he yelled, and though Saint Denis meant little to me, and Montjoie even less, I found myself also shouting at the top of my voice. Words, words! And worse yet, the power of mere noise! I started that ride as sober as any judge and with a coldness in the pit of my stomach; I ended it—by sheer force of bawling—as drunk as Chloe.

Ours was no regular charge, of course. We were, as I have said, flying cavalry, and as a sergeant had told me (all the military instruction I ever received) it was our function to fight after the fashion of hawks. Heavy cavalry, in that skirmish, would have been worse than useless, because, having gone through the enemy according to the rules of art, it would have found itself bogged. We, advancing with less weight and knowing our business (that is, all of us save myself) smote the Milanese troop with

shock enough to break its formation; but then we broke our own, spread left and right from our center and fought man to man as adversaries offered. Knowing naught of what I was supposed to do, I was riding dazed in the wake of the lieutenant when from the tail of my eye I perceived a Milanese coming up from behind me with sword upraised. I sent a back-hand slash at him in my amazement, and cut his eyes out.

AYE, like that; felt not even the contact of my blade—crouched still, waiting for the clang of his sword on my helm or backplate; turned when it did not come, and saw this fellow bareheaded—he had curly hair—with both hands clapped to his face and blood pouring through his fingers. Just for an instant I saw him thus, and I can see him now; I have been seeing him ever since.

His eyes that had been used to look at the snow-caps on the mountains. . . .

Somebody struck me grievously on the helmet and mine own vision was drowned in stars. I fell forward on my horse's neck, embracing him like a brother while feeling exceeding sick, and but for the wrist-knot I wore in the Spanish fashion, should have lost my sword and my life as well. Because I'd scarce recovered my wits when the Milanese officer himself came riding at me, sword at the point, with the evident intention of spitting me like a sucking-pig. I wish I could tell how I foined with him and foiled him, but indeed all I know of our traffic together is that he missed me and that I hit him. And down he went, one foot still in the stirrup, and his horse ran away, dragging him. I turned (having by now come to the edge of the swamp) and saw this fine fellow, all spread-eagled, bouncing over the ground behind his charger, like a bunch of rags.

"Montjoie Saint Denis!" shouts somebody near me, though, and I was all afire again. My sergeant was in sore straits with a couple of opponents near at hand. I rode up behind one of them and stabbed him in the back of the neck, just under the rim of the helmet, and he arched backward and fell half across my saddle-bow.

"Ha ha!" roars the sergeant. "Neatly done, doctor! Not so—fellow?"

He ran his own remaining man through the throat and turned toward me laughing as though he had been at the play. It seemed but, a moment later that I looked down and saw him lying on his back, his mouth open and sightless eyes staring at the sky. But it must have been some minutes at the least, because I recall that his hands were fixed like claws upon his breastplate, showing that he had had time for an agony.

I found that my hands were wet and slippery, and was surprised that it was with blood. I tried to shout the battle-cry on my own behalf, and could but croak. My right arm seemed to belong to someone else—it was as though I watched it rising and falling with a red blade at the end of it, and as though the men on whom it fell were unsubstantial, fleshless, the figments of a dream. I have since seen many a young fellow in the same state—it is the battle-madness, and he who hath experienced the same will forever beware of holding himself superior in creation to bulls and panthers and mad dogs and such-all.

The fight was thinning. The men I saw through the red mists that seemed to obscure mine eyesight, were more and more often in our own scarlet and gold. More and more often my horse stumbled over limp things that had been men—here was the curly-headed lad I'd blinded, stumbling around in circles on his own feet, his hands still to his face—screaming—

CHAPTER VIII

INTERLUDE

IT HAD been a horrible nightmare, methought as I opened my eyes.

But no—dreams do not transport the physical body, and certainly my carcase, of which I now became painfully aware, had never before been in this high-ceiled, sunlit room.

Nor in this canopied bed, nor in the presence of this monk who was sitting by the bedside reading a fat book through horn spectacles.

Nor had I ever laid eyes before on the girl who was talking earnestly to an old man at the far end of the chamber. The girl's back was toward me. The old man, white-bearded and with the face of an eagle, was looking thoughtfully past her at my bed. His eyes met mine; he started and ejaculated: "*Miracolo!* He's awake!"

With the girl, he hurried over to me. The friar shut his book, rose and surveyed me over his spectacles.

I tried to raise my head, but a savage pain in it laid me back on the pillows, groaning.

"Easy, easy," says the monk. "*Festina lente*, young man. Hasten slowly."

"Where am I?"

My tongue seemed too large for my mouth.

"Thou'rt safe," says the girl in a warm, low voice, smiling at me.

"In the house of Signore Domenico Nori," says the monk.

"Who," adds the old gentleman, "is proud to have thee. Any enemy of those accursed—"

"Now, father!" The girl seized an arm with which he had commenced to saw the air. "The gentleman is in no state foi more war at the moment. He wonders how he came here, and 'tis hard for him to ask questions. Not so? Then tell him—reasonably, darling."

The monk was feeling my wrist-pulse; and knew how.

"Ahem!" says the old gentleman. "Well, sir, some ten days ago, while I was overseeing certain small works which are in hand for the beautification of my humble gardens, I was honored by a visit from an officer of French nationality who had thee across his saddle-bow, senseless and in a considerable condition of gore. And he informed me, as well as he could for the language, that you had been wounded; *videlicet*, struck over the head with some weapon or other while fighting for His Majesty of France against that damned interloping family of Sforza—not that, with due respect, I can recognize His Majesty as rightful heir to the Visconti, but—"

The girl laid her hand on his arm, and he blinked.

"Ah—yes, certainly, my dear. . . To be brief, the officer bespoke our best attention, saying, if I mistake not, that your honor was a man of science? I thought so. And in short, the combination of learning with valor—in such a cause—we have been delighted—"

Wherewith he made a large gesture with his right hand, advanced his leg and bowed.

"Ten days?" says I, rolling my eyes toward the friar.

"Thrown from thy horse, *I* think," says he crustily. "Compression of the brain. Dost see double?"

"No," I told him, and suddenly remembered my last sight—of that soldier with his eyes cut out. "Singly is—enough."

"If thou can jest, thou'lt do," says the monk sourly. A fine jest! "Madonna Agata can doctor thee now. I'll go back to the folk who really need me."

"But surely, brother—" says the old gentleman.

"No buts. A fever that's ravaging a whole valley needs me more than a young spark's bumped head. I've left the herbs for infusion in the still-room —*ter die sumendum*—three times a day, and the dregs to be plastered on the back of the neck as before. He may try out his legs in this room tomorrow, and in the garden as soon thereafter as may be, avoiding wine, high-spiced meats and irritability of the emotions for a week at least—if he can— And now *pax vobiscum in nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen*, and will Your Worship have my mule brought round to the door at once?"

"Surely—" says old Nori, aghast. But the monk would have none of him and so they went out together.

The girl Agata, her arms on the footboard of the bed, looked at me and laughed, and I even essayed a smile myself. She was a small, slim girl with eyes very like my mother's.

"Better try to sleep again," says she —in a voice very like my mother's, too.

"What is't o'clock?" I asked.

"All times are the same to a sick man," says she, drawing the curtains on the window side of the bed. "Tomorrow, shalt be up betimes, doctor. A fine doctor art thou, to be chopping poor men

up and getting half-killed thyself! Fie! Now close thine eyes."

I WILL not disguise that during the two weeks following, I fell in love with Agata Nori. But neither will I make much on't, because this is not my history, who am of little importance to anyone, but that of Cesare Borgia, who is playing his part in folks' lives today and will continue to do so until men cease to goggle at his glitter and consider him —well, as I shall describe him.

His name came up, as object both of admiration and of scorn, the first day I was permitted to walk in the gardens. Leaning on Agata's arm, I had attained to a *belvedere* some fifty ells from the house, and there old Nori joined us, accompanied by a man who though elderly, was younger than himself.

This gentleman's name was Salviati, and he had just returned from a visit to Milan.

"Doctor Torella," says Agata's father, "will be glad to hear of His Majesty's popularity in the city. Aha, the people have an instinct for their friends not, as I have said, that Louis is a true Visconti."

"Then perhaps," says Salviati—he had but one eye, and a sardonic look in it— "that is why the people seem to prefer the Duke of Valentinois, to the King. Or might it be because he flings ducats among 'em, while His Majesty scatters *quattrini*?"

"The Duke of Valentinois?" sputters old Nori. "Why, that's Cesare Borgia, the Spanish bastard, the apostate Cardinal! It must be the bribery, *signore*—a fellow of no family, of *worse* than no family—"

"But of very sound views. I speak as a landowner, Signore Domenico, and know whereof I speak. Times have changed, times have changed—all this unrest among the peasants, thou know'st; that's why I went to Milan, with some other gentlemen, to see if the King would not give us some laws against the rabble. Why, oons, it's got so that unless they have meat—*meat!* —on their tables the rogues won't plough a field!"

"That's this Sforza Duke for you," says old Nori.

"Ah, well, this King that's thrown him out and claims to be a Visconti, was too busy to receive us, too busy—*hunting*. Saw him ride forth. But the Duke gave us audience, and very affably. Said he'd speak with His Majesty and try to get us laws to keep our rascals to their duty; understood, with hardly telling, that 'twas as much to their advantage, as to ours. A very noble gentleman, I thought him."

"He's a Borgia," says old Nori, "and an upstart villain, like all the Borgias."

"Sir!"

"Nay, tell me not of *his* understanding of your troubles and the peasants'—"

Signore Salviati arose, his one eye indignant.

"All the advantage *he* cares for is his own. Tell me not—they're all the same, these upstarts. Fair talk, fair words, promising everything to everybody, and getting everything for themselves, aye, if it takes murder to do it!"

"Sir, if you yourself were now a landowner—"

"And that I am not," says old Nori, rising in his turn, "I have to thank another brood of upstarts—these Sforzas, whose grandfather was a mattock-man in a ditch. Beware lest some day you have to thank this Cesare Borgia for a similar deprivation, *signore!* A man that would murder his own brother will not stick at filching thy fields!"

"Sir, I am astonished!"

"Sir, it astonishes *me* that a man of good blood like yourself should approve —why, by Gabriel his trumpet, if a dog of Cesare Borgia's came to my gate, I'd kick him away—and I like dogs."

Agata put her hand on her father's arm.

"This is exciting our guest," she murmured; and the old man glanced at me in apology.

"We will continue our discussion elsewhere," says he. But Signore Salviati, pale with rage, was in no mood for discussion. He had been wounded in his finest feelings—his love for his acres— and he said he would go, and old Nori, stiff as a lance-shaft, said he would have

the honor to escort him to the gate. And so they left us.

Agata looked at me anxiously, and put a soft hand on my forehead.

"Why," says she, "thou'rt pale as death, and a moment since wast as red as fire. Art faint, Messer Torella?"

It was hard to tell her, but I knew I must.

"Your father—" says I, "Cesare Borgia—"

She looked at me with widening eyes.

"I—serve the Duke. I am his physician."

She put her hand to her heart.

"At least," I said, "I *was*. But—"

"My father must not know of this until—until thou'rt recovered," says the girl; and shivered. "Come, *signore,* it grows chill. Let us go into the house."

I WAS for leaving that house, for all my illness, rather than stay there under false pretenses, but Agata would by no means let me. And indeed it is doubtful whether, for some weeks thereafter, I could have ridden a horse for more than a mile—that blow on the skull had induced a strange numbness in my legs, so that they gave way under me at odd times, and certainly would have been too weak to hold me in a saddle.

I had to walk carefully, on Agata's arm, and little by little, she weaned me from the idea that I'd sold my soul to Cesare. I had been his physician, to be sure, but he had given me leave to be a soldier; I had been killed, or as near as made no matter, and what presumption was it in me, to imagine that so great a lord would bear me still in mind!

Couriers on the Genoa road, stopping at old Nori's lodge-gates for a cup of wine, brought news that Cesare was indeed risen to new greatnesses. The Pope had issued a brief accusing the lords of the Romagna of divers crimes and depriving them of their lordships; and it was said that Cesare, with a vast army he had wheedled out of the French king, was to march south and take over these tyrannies for the Church. He was to have Papal troops as well; Vitelozzo Vitelli the *condottiere* was to join him—he would be the most powerful prince in all Italy; and what recollection, indeed, should he have of the like of me?

And my disinclination to recall myself to his memory increased with the flying days. It was on a bright afternoon in October, when my legs were better but I was walking arm-in-arm with Agata for other reasons, that I looked at the trees, now turning to gold and scarlet, and said I would like to stay thereabouts forever.

"And why not?" says she. "We have no physician—Fra Tommaso is always away; says he hath enough to do with folk worse off than ours."

"And besides," says I, "he is scarcely a physician. Thinks malaria is caused by those stinging flies from the swamps!"

He had passed by the Nori home a week before, and we had had a bitter argument.

"But he gives his life to the poor people," says Agata gently, "and saves many, many of them."

That shamed me.

"There's little profit in't," says I, trying to overwhelm that shame with a greater.

"Money is not everything," says the girl.

The devil seemed to have seized my tongue.

"It hath its uses, in this wicked world," says I with a world-weary air. "For instance, some day, I may wish to marry."

Not having been able to be frank with her father, of course I had not made love to Agata. Yet my saying of these last words was sheer cruelty. Because I had just exhibited myself to poor advantage, I must avenge my vanity by hurting her, and I succeeded far beyond my vilest hopes. Any girl I had known, up to then, would have tossed her head and said I could wed and welcome for her part, if I could find a woman fool enough to take me, to which of course I should have replied—

But Agata knew not the rules of the game. How should she, poor sweet, motherless from birth and with a father that thought duennas were unnecessary among gentlefolk? 'Twas his belief that the function of such ladies was to protect girls from the wiles of men—where-

as in truth, of course, 'tis to instruct them in the best means of battering down the defenses of mankind.

Unlearned in any such lore, Agata now gasped and turned tear-filled great brown eyes upon me as though I had struck her in the face.

It goes without saying that the next moment she was in my arms, and doing what crying she felt necessary, against my doublet.

I spare the reader the account of what we said—how I humbled myself and she forgave me; how I extolled her forbearance and she put her hand over my mouth and I kissed the palm of it, and —and all that. I have so lost self-esteem since that evening, that I think the said reader may be more interested in his own love affairs than in mine of fifty years agone.

'TIS NOT, in any case, our coming together that matters to this history, but what forced us apart—the sound of a horseman, coming down the Milan road at a fast canter and then slowing as if to stop at our gate. We were so as to be visible from the road; loosed each other, and I stepped away to look over the wall.

"Another post," I said, in a tone designed to convince heaven and earth that whatever I had been doing, I had not been kissing a girl. "More news of—"

It was not a post.

My heart stood still.

The man had halted at the gate by this time, and, looking down at him, I perceived at once that he was Jacopo, Cesare's man.

Moreover, looking up, he saw me—and Agata, who had come to my side. He snatched a paper from his belt and waved it.

"Will Your Honor come down?" he cried, all agrin. "Or shall I—"

"What is it?" says Agata.

"Stay here," I said, in dire agitation, patted her hand and hastened away to the steps leading down to the porter's lodge. Old Battista had opened the postern by this time and was staring spellbound at the gorgeous figure before him; aye, it was visible in the dress of this bravo, that reports of my master's growing greatness had not lied. He was figged out more richly than any of the nobles that visited old Nori—silk hose, one leg red and t'other yellow; a scarlet surcoat, with Cesare's cipher embroidered on the bosom in gold; a velvet cloak and a hat with a medal in it like a gentleman's.

"Is't thou, Jacopo?"

"Indeed, yes, Your Honor," says he, preening. "And hoping that you now enjoy your good health again. I have become a courier—as may be seen. A better life, sir."

He was holding out his dispatch to me, but I did not take it.

"How did the Duke know of my whereabouts?"

"When the captain of yon cavalry troop had orders to report on thee—dead or alive?" says Jacopo. "I took the message to him myself, night before you rode out. Ah, Your Honor, there's little His Grace doth *not* know, that he's a mind to. Knew I'd fallen in love a'most before I did myself, and said it would make me too soft for throat-cutting, and made me his special messenger, as you see, God bless him! Which is why I bring Your Worship this letter."

"Is it—recalling me?"

"Why, I think likely, sir—but the letter itself will tell, if Your Honor will please take it?"

I took it; but—Agata had come down the stairway and was standing at my elbow.

"I'll not go," I told Jacopo.

He stared at me like an idiot.

"Not—not *go*, sir? If His Highness commands?"

Agata took my arm. Jacopo looked from one to the other of us, stupefied.

"If Your Honor would read the letter—" says he.

"Thou'st heard the answer," said Agata.

"But—but—your ladyship," he stuttered. "If His Worship would condescend to read the letter—"

" 'Twould be all one," says I, for what was a Duke, compared with that little hand on my arm? "His Grace can

do without me well enough. I'll not go."

Still dazed, as if with an extremity of thought, Jacopo bowed like a puppet and backed to his horse. He mounted, and seemed to recover some few of his wits.

"Sir, sir," he said urgently, "I understand—oons, sir, I myself—but bethink yourself, doctor, does one say 'nay' to the Duke?"

"I have said it."

"But it is impossible to be done!" cried Jacopo wildly. "At least—at least—I'll not do it. I shall tell His Highness 'yes' to whatever may be in the letter—and God save Your Honor!"

He flourished his hat, wheeled his horse, struck spurs, and was gone.

"And now," says Agata, pale but resolute, "we can go to my father."

That was reasonable, but—but I was not too eager, even so, to face old Nori, who would have turned away a dog that belonged to a Borgia.

"I'd better read the letter," says I; but Agata put her hand across it.

"No. Give it to him unopened; tell him thou'st answered it 'nay'—unread. And let us go to him now, Gaspare."

HE WAS sitting on the *perrone*, as the dusk fell, and with him, to my dismay, was Fra Tommaso.

"Thou'rt out late, daughter," says the old man mildly. "The night air—"

"The night air harms no one," snapped the monk. " 'Tis mosquitoes from the swamps. And there are no swamps hereabouts. Pshaw!"

He was ready for another argument, but I was not. In silence, I held out the dispatch to old Nori, who looked from it to me and from me to Agata.

"What's this?"

"It appears to be a letter," says Fra Tommaso bitterly. He peered over the old man's shoulder. "Sealed with—a bull pascant, quartered on the arms of France."

"Bull pascant?" says Nori, bewildered. "But that's Borgia! And France—it's that accursed Cesare!"

"And addressed," the friar read, " 'To our well-beloved physician, Gaspare Torella.' Ha!"

"*His* physician?" says Agata's father, staring at me aghast.

Agata put her hand on his shoulder. "Not now. Nevermore!"

"I—I could not prevent his writing to me, sir," says I miserably, "but I have—refused his service."

"Shall I read this document?" demands Fra Tommaso in a voice of brass. And without waiting for permission, proceeded to do so.

"*To our beloved physician*—all that over again—*at the house of Domenico Nori, by Novara*—obviously—*these in haste: Know that since issuance of a Brief by His Holiness the Pope, deposing from the domains of Imola and Forli our cousin Caterina, heretofore known as Countess of the said Domains*—"

"Caterina Sforza's no cousin of his," says old Nori, "unless—zounds!—he's writing as a king already."

"*Since issuance of the said Brief,*" says Fra Tommaso glaring at the old man over his spectacles, "shall I go on? *a sad pestilence hath fallen among the people of the city of Imola, and it is reported to Us that distress is great, because of the violence of the disease and the lack of physicians. Now therefore, being unwilling that the said citizens should suffer from the misdeeds of their Lady, and being appointed by His Holiness as Vicar in her place, we do hereby command you, upon your obedience to Us, to repair forthwith to the said city of Imola and there render what aid may be possible to thine Art. In the which fail not.* Written by a secretary and signed 'Cesare Borgia de France'."

Tommaso folded the letter again and held it out to me.

"And so thou'st refused to go, eh?" says he. "Just what I should have expec—"

"He will go!" says Agata, furiously. " 'Twas that he thought—he thought—"

"Thy daughter seems very well acquainted with the young man's thinking, Domenico," says the monk; but old Nori seemed not to hear.

"To think that a Borgia—" he was muttering, amazed.

" 'Tis well done of him, is't not?" demanded Tommaso.

"Well done? Indeed yes, but—"

" 'Indeed yes,' will do," says the monk sharply. "Let's hope the doctor here, may do half as well. And now, young man, thou'st a long ride ahead of thee tomorrow."

I had another half-hour with Agata —on the *perrone,* in full sight of the two elders, and then Fra Tommaso herded me off—to bed, he said, but really to a lecture on how city fevers were caused, like malaria, by insects, but wingless ones, this time.

I could have choked him—maundering on about his vermin while Agata, most like, was crying her eyes out. I did ask him (when he railed against the rich for preserving pools and rivers for fish) whether he thought poor folk could wash off the rays of an afflicted Jupiter, with pond-water; but in vain—he adjured me on behalf of his vermin until daybreak.

And then he must needs ride with me interminable miles, joggling along on his fat mule and talking endlessly about fleas. . . .

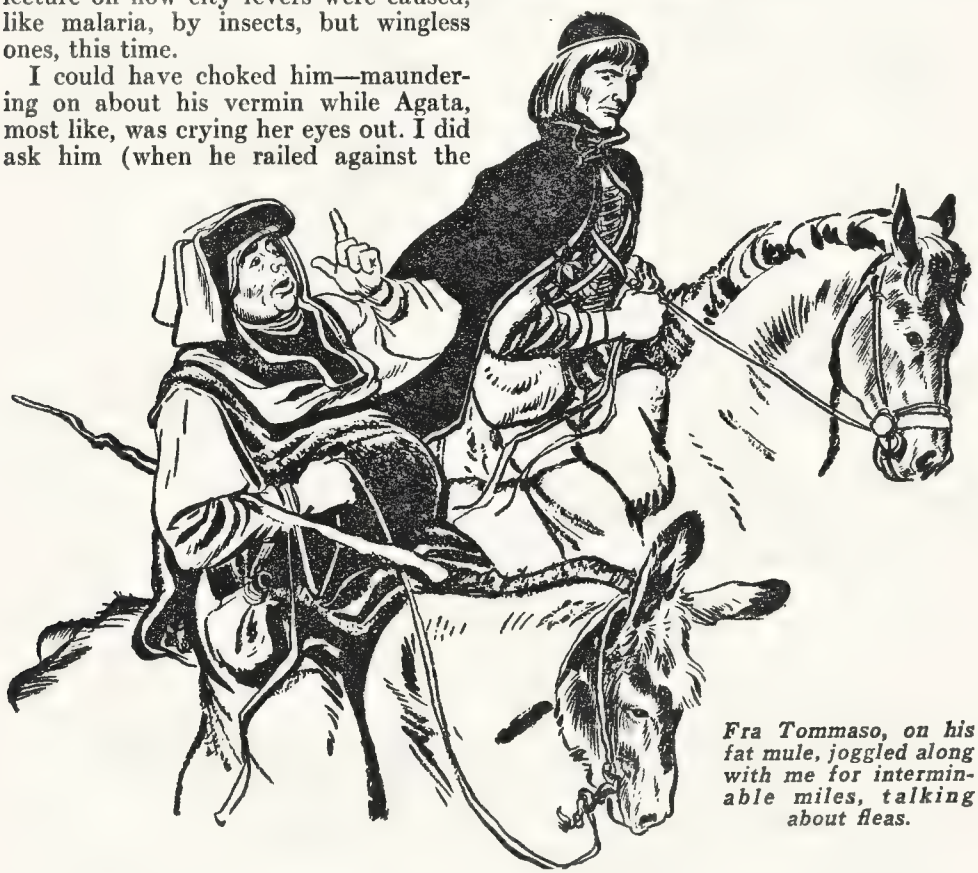
I came to Imola (having covered fifty leagues in two days) just before the closing of the gates. It was on a Saturday evening.

CHAPTER IX

A PLOT UNCOVERED

THE CITY was indeed grievously smitten.

So much was evident from the acceptance of me without question, though I was still in soldier-clothes—all I had. And the malady was indeed that spotted influenza which Fra Tommaso had attributed to insects—



Fra Tommaso, on his fat mule, joggled along with me for interminable miles, talking about fleas.

The gate-sergeant, begging me for God's pity to visit his sister, who lived in one of the streets most viciously infected, said that most of the doctors of the town had fled when the Pope's brief deposed the Countess—and that the Countess herself was too busy defying the said brief with fortifications, to be troubling much about the plague.

"Fortifications?"

"Ah!" says the man, as his soldiers

pushed the gates shut, "they say Cesare Borgia, that's a Duke now, is coming to take the lordship away from her. Better change thy garb, doctor, or she'll have thee filling gabions or manning a gun. She's had the sick working on the walls until they dropped and died. Better change that brogue of thine, too; the Borgias have put her out of conceit with Spaniards, just now. Not that *I* care."

"Where's the plague worst?"

"Where my poor sister lives—by the Old Market, where the warehouses are. Madonna Cecilia—the first house in the Via Stretta. O doctor!"

He came running after me, his face distorted, as I hurried away.

"Bring me some news of her," he pleaded. "I'd steal five minutes myself, but I daren't—the Countess is hanging mad. Come back and thou can sleep in the guard-room tonight."

I may have seen his sister; there was no time for telling one woman from another, though, nor one house from another, nor one street from the next. And very little time for distinguishing the living from the dead—the one changed to the other, from the pallet to the dead-cart, almost as one looked. And I did not sleep that night in the guard-room —or anywhere else. Nor the next day. I worked on, all travel-stained as I was, until vespers of that second evening. Never have I seen a fever of such virulence; perhaps because nowhere else have I seen people so ill-fitted to withstand it. They were skin and bone, these Imolans of the slums, skin and bone and indeed very dirty.

Also they were savage, like beasts.

About dusk of the second day, half-dying as they were, what must they do but riot in the market square, because the Lady Caterina had ordered the dead to be burned outside the city walls, instead of crammed into the bulging earth. I'd seen the common graves as I came into the town, and very horrible they were. But a priest had said a few words over them, I suppose; and these wretches, dying out of a hell on earth, may have thought that gave them a little better chance of heaven.

Their sovereign lady cared not what they thought. While they milled round and about the dead-carts they had halted on their way to the gate—crying their grief and rage in weak voices like cats mewing—she appeared, well-fed and lusty, at the head of a troop of horses, and in a voice as strong as a man's commanded them to disperse or be ridden down.

I looked long at her as she sat her horse—a tall, well-built woman of some thirty years, beautiful in a style I do not like—and suddenly found myself alone.

The rioters had fled like rats to their holes—I wondered at such extravagance of terror—and I heard her ladyship say: "Who's that bold rogue? Come here, you man."

I had started toward her—and toward my death, as I now think—when an officer answered for me.

"Physician, Your Ladyship. Came yesterday. Working very hard."

She put out her hands to ward me off, though I was still a dozen ells from her.

"Nay, keep away, infection! Cure me some fellows to fill barrels with stones. Back to thy work, doctor! And come, Giuseppe—back to ours. At the trot!"

They clattered back over the cobblestones the way they had come—avoiding the worst-fevered streets, I noticed. And I went back to my alleyways to find that I had been supplanted by two monks.

"Go thou and get something to eat —and some sleep," says one of them. "We can do what's to be done here."

" 'Tis not much, I fear."

The older monk looked at me with his head o' one side.

" 'Twould have been less—for thee— had thou spoken to the Countess a moment since. Thou'rt Spanish, eh?"

"What of it?"

"Nothing to me, but much to the Lady Caterina. She's got five Spanish heads on spikes over the gate-house this minute, men that had been here for years —spies for Cesare Borgia, she called 'em."

My spine prickled.

"But that's madness," says I, though by no means sure of the diagnosis.

"Mad she may be, but there's method in't. They *were* in correspondence with the Duke, aye, and there's more like 'em, Imolans born. Was her ladyship mad when she had a whole quarter of the town butchered—stood by and saw it done? Beware of her, young man. Now her lordship's threatened, she's ready to poison the Pope."

I crossed myself. Poison again!

"God forbid!"

"I hope He may, doctor," says the younger friar, "but in all reverence I find it comfortable also—the world being so vile—to think His Holiness hath all his food thrice tasted. . . Now be off and restore thyself, and—Benigno, take thou that side of this street and I'll take the other."

I would sleep in the guardhouse—but, before going there, I bethought me of Cesare's letter, which I still had in my bosom. That would hang me quickly enough! I must destroy it; stopped by one of the torches which were lighting the streets for the benefits of the dead-carts, and, before thrusting the paper into the flame, opened it and glanced at its contents.

They were as Fra Tommaso had read; in a fine clerkly hand.

But, under the signature and in the same writing as that sprawled "Cesare Borgia de France," were a few other words:

"Let the sick know who sent thee. Wait for me there at Imola. I come soon."

I WOULD *not* wait for him.

Nor would I contribute my present peril to his glory, as I had contributed my book. I would work among these poor folk until either they lived or I died, but thereafter I would be mine own man—I would go to Nori and wed Agata, and if the long arm of Cesare reached for me again, I would flee to Viana, my birthplace and risk the old Marquis who had had the mercury.

So much I decided during that long night in the guardhouse, while the charcoal brazier crackled and stank and the soldiers off duty threw dice and talked mutiny, and the eternal dead-carts creaked by with their drivers crying, "Unclean! Unclean!"

And so far, Fate agreed with me; that I was not, indeed, to await Cesare's coming to Imola. But my further decisions—ah, those were another matter. I had made them, drowsy with exhaustion—and Fate never sleeps.

The gate-sergeant awoke me before I had well closed my eyes, hammering on the door of my cell and howling that I'd been asleep twelve hours. I had been put in a cell leading off the guardroom, for fear of infection. And when I came to the door of it, the sergeant backed away.

"No closer, I beseech thee. A monk was here, saying the other monk hath taken the fever and wilt thou go at once. Please to leave by the back way, doctor."

"I have no news of thy sister," I told him, lacing my clothes with fingers thick from sleep.

He shook his head, and tears began to roll down his rough cheeks.

"*I* have," said he. "She went—went past here—last night. Like a faggot in a bundle—to be burned—one arm hanging down—little Cecilia—"

Of a sudden he became ferocious.

"Curse them!" says he, shaking his fist in the air but not speaking very loud. "Curse them all!"

And before I could ask him whom he cursed and for what, he had flung the door to with a crash and gone back to his duty. He must have meant the Countess Caterina and her family, I thought vaguely, stumbling back to my sick; 'twas evident she was much hated. Some of my patients of yesterday had muttered against her, saying that the country-folk throve, because they could be hired forth as soldiers, but that they in the city could starve and be damned.

One man, at the point of death, had asked me if I knew of Cesare Borgia. As, startled, I'd hesitated, he'd said: "They say—he's merciful—to poor folks."

And when I'd asked who'd said so, the fellow had smiled, rolled up his eyeballs and died.

Had one of those heads now over the gate-house, informed him, I wondered?

Thinking of him, and entering a hovel

on the corner of a noisome alley, I thought for an instant that the wretch had been resurrected. Here lay another man, equal to that former one in raggedness and emaciation, lying on just such another pallet and at just about the same point of fever.

At first, I thought he was dead; pulled open his shirt to feel his heart, and—placed my hand on a folded parchment.

A parchment—there!

The man was too far gone to know what I did—there could be but a few minutes more of life in him—and I went over to the door to examine my strange trove.

It was a letter—nay, it was a diplomatic dispatch, bound with red ribbon and sealed in four places. I turned it over and saw that it was addressed from the Countess Caterina, with all her titles, to—

None other than His Holiness the Pope!

MY HEART gave a great thump, and the hair rose on my head, before my thinking mind could take in the enormity. Yes—I bristled as doth a dog before hidden danger, while yet I was wondering how a courier, entrusted with a document of State, could come to be lying neglected in such misery.

"Hola! Hola!" comes a voice from outside. "Doctor!"

It was the monk who, last night, had told me that the Countess had talked of poisoning the Pope.

And as I heard him, I knew in a lightning-flash, what wickedness I had stumbled on.

Not only had that virago talked of killing His Holiness; here was the proof that she had gone about to do it. And by what devilish means! Here was something that would pass all his guards, defy all his tasters of food and wine, and strike down the Holy Father in the innermost room of the Vatican.

The monk passed along the street, still calling, but I paid him no heed.

Messengers to the Pope, I remembered, wore gloves when handing him dispatches—O wickedness! Everything thought of! Yet this must not be. . .

How to frustrate it?

I stood as though petrified, but my mind worked very fast. The parchment had been placed on a man with the fever at its worst. Whoever had placed it—perhaps the Countess' own physician—must have known the fellow had not long to live. Indeed, (as I saw, walking over to the pallet) he was already dead. They would be back soon for their dispatch—they must be at hand now, lest the wretch go to the burning-place without yielding his deathly document. If I took it, 'twould be known; I should be murdered to keep my tongue still—and the plot would succeed after all.

Scarce knowing what I did, I had just slipped the parchment back inside the dead man's shirt when footsteps stopped at the door of the hovel, and I turned to find myself confronted by two men. They were rough fellows, but better dressed than laborers, wearing vinegar cloths to keep their mouths and noses from infection. I noted that one of them had a squint.

They stopped short at sight of me and laid hands to their belts.

"Who'rt thou?" says the squinting man. "What make you here?"

O Aesculapius, god of physicians, save me now from my Spanish accent!

"A doctor," says I; and saw the muscles of their shoulders relax.

The squinting man walked over to the pallet and stirred its occupant with his foot. The dead man's shirt fell open, and there was disclosed the corner of that accursed letter.

"Ha!" says he, with a sigh of relief. "Naught to be done for the poor fellow, eh?"

I shook my head.

"We'll take care of him now," says the squinting man. "We're his brothers."

The other man was still standing, hand on belt, between me and the doorway, but his comrade must have made him some signal, for now he moved aside.

I SPREAD my hands with a gesture of helplessness, shook my head and walked past him—out into the blessed air, the chilly sunshine of that November day.

The first frost would abate the fever —I remember thinking so, and caring not at all. One paramount duty lay before me now—to ride to Rome and warn His Holiness; and to this day I am amazed at the cunning with which I went about my escape.

I thought it likely that the Countess —needing every hand for her guns and her gabions—would have forbidden exit from the town; I knew right well that, as a doctor, I should be especially prohibited; I took no thought as to how I should evade the ban. Thought is well enough, but how much more we can do when peril drives us back on our thoughtless faculties—the same by which a homing pigeon finds its way through trackless air!

I have always been a simple man—witless, say my brother doctors; but I mean, devoid of guile. Yet on that day, no thief could have surpassed the subtlety with which I got my horse from its stable behind the guardhouse; and no play-actor could have bettered the state of terror in which, mounted, I approached the gate.

The gates were open for the dead-carts, but soldiers armed with halberds stood on either side, and at sight of me they crossed their weapons to bar my way.

One of them called out, and the sergeant came running from the guard-room. He'd been eating, and was wiping his mouth.

"Hola! What the devil—"

"Let me pass!" I shrieked at him like a man demented. "I've seen death enough! I can no more! Let me pass!"

He came forward and made a grab for my bridle, but I made the horse rear and he missed me.

"Stop him, lads—he's lost his head," roars the sergeant. "Fine doctor! Like the rest—but he'll not go out—"

"What's this?" says a clear, loud voice from the battlements over the gate—it was the Countess Caterina looking down on us. And I burst into a sweat. There'd be no dealing with her—nay, she'd stop my going; a woman like that might have kept Adam and Eve in the Garden.

"Seize him!" she called out, herself starting down the stone steps leading from the wall. The sergeant advanced again toward my bridle—sidewise and careful, like a crab; but now I was demented indeed.

Stopping my soul-searing shrieking about fear (I moan now in the night when I think of that) I set my teeth, kicked my horse in the ribs and set him fairly at the gateway, despite the pikemen. Their weapons were easy brushed aside, they themselves staggered back against the walls of the archway—and then, with a confused hubbub behind me, I was away down the road.

I think they fired a wall-gun after me, but missed—the smoke from the burning-pyres was drifting too thickly between them and me.

I thought little of their artillery—or of the pursuit-squadron that thundered by while I lay hid in a wood—or of the bandits who chased me in the mountains near Spoleto—or of the current that almost drowned me in the upper Tiber, when I was cleansing myself of infection.

It was fated I should win to Rome.

CHAPTER X

THE DISPATCH FROM IMOLA

I WENT, as may be imagined, directly to the Vatican—and willy-nilly besides, with a constable on either hand of me. My mud-stained, ragged, haggard appearance had ill-impressed the lieutenant of the guard at the gate, and the more I had protested that my business was urgent, the more sure had the officer become that I was one of the maniacs who do ever besiege His Holiness.

So I was ordered to be taken to the Captain of the Swiss, and thither I went —afoot—trying to urge those lackadaisical *sbirri* to speed, and reflecting bitterly that the envoys of the Countess Caterina would be expedited to her sacred victim with all courtesy.

I expected naught but to be held in custody for hours—at least until the officer should have finished his dinner and his siesta and any private amusements he might have—but, as I have said, Fate had her hand in these matters.

As we crossed the courtyard to the guard-room, whom in God's name should I see but Pietro, Cesare's body-servant!

I called to him, and he paused and peered at me; but in such condition was I, that he knew me not for the moment.

"Is my lord Cesare in Rome?" I demanded.

"But—but yes—doctor. Came the day before yesterday. But what's befallen Your Honor?"

"Tell him I'm here. Speedily, Pietro!"

The old man hesitated, pulling at his lower lip.

"His Grace is in conclave," says he doubtfully. "Wasn't to be disturbed."

" 'Tis a matter of life and death!"

"I'll—I'll try," says he; and went away reluctantly.

And so for a mortal hour I sat in the guard-room between those *sbirri,* biting my nails and sweating.

And then—after my four days of riding from Imola—what reception did I get from my master?

Pietro came and showed me into a room where Cesare was sitting with some dozen dignitaries in burghers' robes—and my lord gave me a look like thunder and told me to stand in a corner until he had time for me! He threw the order as one throws a whiplash at a dog, and turned back to the gownsmen.

"And what from Pesaro, Messer Vercelli?" says he.

"Sire—" I broke in.

"Silence!" shouted the Duke, striking his hand violently on the table, and as he looked at me I saw that terrible blue glare in his eyes. "Thou'lt speak later. And so will I. . . . Now, Messer Vercelli?"

"Our city is well disposed to Your Highness," stammers the old man, much frightened. "Our lord Giovanni—since 'twas found that—that—"

"That he could not make my sister a dutiful husband—yes," says Cesare, smiling, "he hath been held in some contempt, I dare say?"

"Yes, Your Grace. There has been some amusement among the—the vulgar."

"Just where I desire it. And hast thou spread news of my hatred of the salt-tax?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Then—in a word—is't thine impression that I could march into the city unresisted? Eh?"

The old man licked his lips.

"His lordship Giovanni's gone to Venice, Your Grace—and who knows what that Republic may do? He may have offered them the city; and if they were to send an army—our townsmen have no wish to be besieged."

"H'M," says Cesare; and his eyes wandered over the assemblage. "The same feeling seems to prevail in all your bailiwicks—y'all crave a change to my lordship, so long as it shall not cost ye a ducat or a pint of blood. You of Rimini—Master Cornaro, you say your lord Pandolfo Malatesta is short of money?"

"We are all short of money in Rimini," whines a rat-faced oldster in puce silk. "He hath squeezed us dry in taxes and spent it all on—"

"Faenza—Forli—Piombino—Urbino—" Cesare counted his agents. "All ground down by tyrants, and unwilling to be saved. Y' have not done too well for me so far, gentlemen."

"His lordship Astorre is much loved in Faenza, Your Excellence," pipes one old man.

"And our Duke Guidobaldo in Urbino," squeaks another.

"Indeed, indeed?" says the Duke. "Why, if so—maybe I'd better change my mind and make cause with these gentle gentry. . . . I could amuse them with tales of their leading citizens."

It was horrid to see those aged faces blanch with dread.

"Go back to your towns and do better," says Cesare, leaning suddenly forward across his table and glaring at them; and then he turned his stare on me. It was no wonder the old men rose from their chairs like ghosts and went out of the room as mum as so many mice! Those eyes were enough to chill one's very soul.

Before he spoke to me, the Duke rang a bell that stood before him; and, when Pietro came, ordered him to send Michele.

Michele the bravo!

"And now," says Cesare, settling himself into his chair. "Thine explanation, doctor. Didst see my postscript, ordering thee to stay at Imola and raise my popularity with the populace?"

I became conscious that Michele was in the room, standing just behind me.

"I did, Sire."

"Well?"

Stammering, almost weeping from exhaustion and fear of the dagger so near my back, I told him all.

At the beginning, he was impassive; then I saw him swallow his spittle; then he leaned forward and his eyes glowed. At the end, he leaped up and flung his arm about my shoulders.

"Hast thou washed?" he demanded on the instant, releasing me.

"Yes, Sire."

He put the arm back again.

"I must not fall sick now," said he hurriedly, in a low voice. "Now is my hour—now is my hour, God's wounds! Every prince in Christendom must approve me. . . . Tried to poison the Pope!"

This last was a cry of triumph.

"But, Sire, should not precautions be taken lest the dispatch reach His Holiness while—"

"No dispatches reach His Holiness save through me," says the Duke, rubbing his hands. "His Holiness is too infirm of body and soft of heart. Let's see—thank God I came to Rome!—let's see; I've lances enough at Cesena; four thousand foot—that should be enough. Guns—curse it, why have I not more guns?"

He strode over to the table and laid hands on the bell. Before he could ring it, Pietro appeared in the doorway.

"Ha!" says the Duke. "Just in time. Send a messenger to the Castle, Pietro, and desire Captain Caracciolo to come to me at once."

"Yes, Sire. Your Highness—there is a courier waiting. I offered to bring his dispatch to Your Excellency myself, but he persists it is to be delivered to the Pope's Holiness in person."

A cold chill ran up my spine.

"Whence comes he?" asked Cesare.

"From the Countess Caterina Sforza, my lord."

Cesare let out his breath through his teeth.

"And what like is he, Pietro?"

"Why, Your Grace, he—he is an ordinary man, saving an affliction to one of his eyes—"

"Squinteth?" says the Duke gently.

"Y-yes, Your Highness."

"H'm. A pity. Desire him to come in."

(To be continued)

"Hit For The Hills—The Gallagers Are Loose!"

Would even fat Dry-Gulch Brown, uncurried practical joker, have rigged Sheriff Sam Cutter's wild-goose outlaw chase—when the biggest cattle war in Montana was about to tear peaceful Dry Gulch wide open? Don't miss this smashing frontier novel by *Walt Coburn*—

"Gun-Riot At Dry Gulch."

Also in the March issue, such vigorous Western stories as "The Taming of Buckskin Bill" by Tom Roan, "Friar Robusto's Vengeance Crusade" by Harry F. Olmsted, "Death Owns a Rancho" by M. Howard Lane, a "Tensleep Maxon" story by Bart Cassidy, and other sagas of the six-shooter West!

10c DIME ALL STORIES COMPLETE WESTERN MAGAZINE

Buy your copy of "The World's Leading Western Magazine" today!

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

"MORE Than the Flesh" is the first story by William Ashley Anderson we've published in several years. The last time his name appeared on the *Adventure* contents page was back in the May 15, 1935 issue—and that's too long for him to have been away from home. We think we have a right to say "home" that way for prior to '35 about three dozen Anderson stories had appeared in these pages and, of course, the author was once a member of the editorial staff of the magazine. Now that he's found the way back to his old stamping ground we hope he's going to make frequent visiting a habit. Of his story this month Mr. Anderson says—

Ravenscroft's experiences are not at all improbable—in Ethiopia—nor is his character unusual. Of the three episodes —the wild bees, the skirmish with the fire-flies, and the pigeon taking refuge on Ravenscroft's shoulder—all are factual. We were once held up at a crossing of the Rufiji by fire-flies which were thought to be part of the rear-guard action of retreating Germans. Two friends in German East Africa fell into a bee cave at night and saved themselves by remaining buried for a day and part of the next night. As for the pigeon, that experience happened to me exactly as related, and at the place described, except for the attack by the Danakils. I was the first white man to come down the line from Addis-Ababa, having been trapped there by the cutting of the railway line in the revolution that led to the ascendancy of Haile Selassie (then Ras Taffari).

The recent conquest of Ethiopia by the British has produced a score of characters like Ravenscroft. Most notable, of course, are Orde Charles Wingate and Daniel Sandford—the two who are credited with being the brains behind the campaign. Wingate is in his thirties—"a bearded prophet"—though a graduate of Sandhurst. Sandford is in his 60's, and an old-timer in Ethiopia. It was he who got behind the Italian lines and helped Degach Mangasha and Degach Nagash organize the war from within. In his wanderings among the Italian forces, he was guided by bush telegraph.

Adventure has always had a special interest in Ethiopia. Gordon MacCreagh, who became very influential in Addis-Ababa, was associated with *Adventure* when he first went there. I think you assemble among your alumni a group who could give a highly authoritative report on Ethiopia. I think Captain Sherwood, too, who led a border patrol of King's African Rifles on the southwest frontier, is an old contributor.

Ethiopia is an extraordinarily varied country, geographically and racially, with a rich and violent history that goes far back into antiquity. It has always been

a magnet for adventurers from the days of the search for Prester John right up to the present tumultuous times. It is destined to be still more important in the progress of Africa.

Two of the most exciting characters I knew were Henri de Monfried and A. Besse. The former became an international incident because of his activities in the slave-running, gun-running and hasheesh smuggling operations along the Red Sea coasts. Besse, a brilliant and cultured French trader—the man with whom I first went into Abyssinia, as a friendly competitor—was fined 600,000 rupees by the Italians for aiding the Ethiopians. I have not heard recently from Besse—but I hope he's in a position now to get some of his rupees back!

With best wishes to all. *Kwa heri!*

H. BEDFORD-JONES appends the following to whet the curiosity of any student of Napoleonic history who cares to do a bit of research on the Egyptian phase. We'd be interested to learn what anyone digs up.

This story, freely adapted from Arabic or rather Coptic sources, has not previously appeared in English; though much of the voluminous writings of Sheikh El Mohdi, who knew Napoleon quite intimately, has been published in French translation by the famed orientalist, M. J. Marcel. He was in Egypt with Bonaparte, by the way.

Is the story true? Quite simply, I don't know and don't care. Still, there is some curious internal evidence of a definite kind. Chief among this is the account of the historic Red Sea crossing. This immediately places the story in the latter part of December, 1798, right after the savage revolt of Cairo.

Therefore, it took place before the famous liaison of Bonaparte with Madame Foures, that celebrated woman to whom he had the indiscretion to promise marriage—although they were both already married—and who kept his letters in proof of it. Ergo, the story may well be true.

Queerly enough, it seems most unlikely that Sydney Smith's sense of honor would have caused him to send a warning. I grant this. I even advance it as one of the evidences that truth is stranger than fiction. For this is precisely what Sydney Smith did a little later on, when Kleber was the victim of treachery and the Englishman's honor forbade him to have any part in it. And it will be recalled that Kleber, who succeeded Bonaparte in command of Egypt, was murdered by an assassin instigated by Stamboul.

There may also be internal evidence arguing against the truth of the story; I don't know, as I haven't looked for any. You do it.

F. R. BUCKLEY adds the following footnote to the second installment of "Live by the Sword"—

I should like to write a speculative treatise on the poisons of the Borgias, which have given rise to more argument, over four centuries, than perhaps anything else about that redoubtable family; but I have ere now received hints from official quarters that it might be as well not to go too deeply into details.

Two points can, however, be made without endangering the public safety; concerning the slow-action poison Alexander VI is said to have used on Prince Djem, and the rapid-action venom said to have been used on pins and minutely-spiked rings. It has been claimed that no gradual poison exists, and that since curare (the Indian arrow-poison) was unknown in fifteenth-century Italy, the poisoning by pin-prick must be a legend also.

With regard to the former: Benvenuto Cellini, in his "Autobiography" discourses of slow poisoning with powdered diamond (his own life is saved because a rogue substitutes a softer stone)—and describes symptoms very like those which led to the death of Prince Djem. This aside—gradual poisoning by the heavy metals was, until recently, a common thing in industry. It is true that the dosing must be continual; but in the hosts of servants then surrounding notabilities, it would be easy for a murderer with unlimited funds, to find an accomplice.

And as a matter of fact, at least one clerk in the suite of a Cardinal was arrested, tried and executed after the end of the Borgia regime, for having poisoned his master at the Borgia behest.

As to the poisoned pins and rings—there is evidence in the (quite authentic) attempt of Caterina Sforza to poison the Pope, that an empirical knowledge of infection-mechanisms existed at that time. Without knowing exactly how they were doing it, the slayers may have inoculated their victims with virulent streptococci, or with tetanus; and there

is some evidence in favor even of rabies.

The letter which Caterina Sforza sent to Alexander VI had been laid on the body of a typhus patient, probably; and for technical reasons probably would not have harmed the Pope even had he received it. This is the disease which was known at the time as *influenza*—being attributed to the influence of the planets.

Malaria, as its name implies, was then ascribed to the bad air of the swamplands; in a treatise as late as 1896 I have seen it blamed on the disintegration of rocks! But that a practitioner (probably unqualified) may in the XV century have guessed a connection between the malady and the *mosquitoes* in the swamp air, is not impossible; hence my representation of Fra Tommaso. A staggering number of medical facts have been forced upon the profession by old wives and savages; the utilities of digitalis, for heart-troubles; of cinchona, for malaria; and of chaulmoogra oil for leprosy, among them.

JAMES HENRY HOLMES joins the ranks of our Writers' Brigade with "Swamp Shooter" and according to *Camp-Fire* custom rises to introduce himself. He says—

I love all the high excitement that goes with the oil game, for I was born and brought up in the heart of Oklahoma's oil country. The mammoth Seminole field is at my back door and I've seen a tiny village boom into a roaring city of 20,000 people almost over night. Seismographing or "doodlebugging" as this oil exploration work is called is only a small part of the game but it is the end I know best from working on it. It is a highly technical business and any doodlebugger will recognize the simplifications I have made so as not to clutter up the story with too much technical detail.

The doodlebug crew's job is not to drill for oil but to find it. A crew is divided up into groups within itself: the field office, the surveyors, the drillers, the shooters, and the observers. The party chief is boss over the whole crew and the field chief is boss in the field. The surveyors go in first and lay off the land, that is, mark the places where a hole is to be drilled. Then the drillers follow them up drilling shallow holes for the dynamite. Last come the shooters and the observers along together, the shooters planting the dynamite and the observers setting up their equipment; then when the observer calls for it over the short wave or field telephone (whichever they are using on that area) the shooter explodes the dynamite and the observer records the shot. These records are taken into the field office where they are calculated and an underground map of the rock strata and formations is made.

All that is the work but there is plenty of fun along with it. It is hard work and sometimes dangerous (the company I worked for had a bad explosion a few years back that killed six or seven men on that particular crew) but it is worth it. There is diversion enough, each time a crew moves to a town, new girls, new places, always on the move and working in the great out-of-doors. It's a happy-go-lucky existence that you find no where else. I haven't had so much fun, ever.

In South Louisiana where I have set this story it doesn't rain, it comes a "gully washer" and the bottom falls out of the sky. Ordinarily a crew working in the swamp wouldn't have to stop because of the rain but here the river runs through the middle of the swamp and when it rains it rises with a "whoosh" that covers all but the highest points of land where the little settlements are located. Because the water is so swift it tears up the hyacinths by the roots and piles them up together like a blanket on top of the water. They aren't strong enough to support a man's weight but they are strong enough to keep him from getting back through to air if he can't touch bottom and push through. Men have gone down and drowned because of these beautiful pests. Even if it weren't for the hyacinths (some places are clear) the water would be too swift for a man to work in, besides sweeping away the instruments.

On dry land the crews usually don't work in the field when it rains but stay in and overhaul equipment. This is for various reasons but mainly because the rain makes too much noise. That is, the seismometers (we call them "bugs") would pick up the noise of the rain striking the earth and it would show up on the recording. These instruments are little cylinders of aluminum about the size of a quart fruit jar and filled with delicate wires and radio tubes. They are so sensitive that I have had to dig one up and plant it again because I accidentally buried a bug or ant in the hole with it and when the insect wiggled around the instrument picked up the sound and caused interference.

(Continued on page 124)

HOW I STEPPED Into A Big Pay HOTEL JOB

Wm. E. Gresley, Cab Driver, Who Knew Nothing About Hotel Work, Now Manager

"Driving a cab means long hours in rain, storm and hail, earning just enough to get by. Is it any wonder then that after reading about the opportunities for trained men in hotels, I enrolled for Lewis Training? Am glad I did! For three seasons I've been Manager of a beautiful Florida hotel, and for two summers, Assistant Manager of a Bar Harbor hotel. Lewis Training made all this possible."

Opportunities for Trained Men and Women

Good position from coast to coast for trained men and women in hotel, club, restaurant and institutional field. Thousands of our graduates now holding well-paid positions as Manager, Assistant Manager, Chief Accountant, Comptroller, Purchasing Agent, Auditor and 55 other different types of positions. Previous experience proved unnecessary. For 26 years, Lewis Trained men and women, both young and mature, have been winning success. Now opportunities will be greater than ever before with the Government's defense food, housing and recreation program swelling the demand. Good grade school education, plus Lewis Training, qualifies you at home in leisure time for this business where you are not dropped because you're over 40. FREE book gives details; explains how you are registered FREE of extra cost in Lewis National Placement Service as a Certified Employee guaranteed to "make good" when placed. Write for your copy today! LEWIS HOTEL TRAINING SCHOOLS, Room AE-7217, Washington, D. C.

26th SUCCESSFUL YEAR

DRAFTING

MORE DRAFTSMEN NEEDED in all manufacturing and building lines—$30 to $50 a week and UP. Learn *quickly* at home in spare time. *Selective Employment Service.* Write NOW for FREE Bulletin. No obligation.

American School
Dept. D D 349, Drexel & 58th, Chicago

"Where training *pays*"

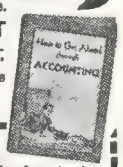
LEARN ACCOUNTING at home

—at a fraction of the usual cost

Men trained in accounting have big advantages these days—expanding business and industry must have them; attractive pay; direct road to preferred executive positions or own practice. GET READY NOW, in spare time, to make most of important new opportunities. Learn by a proved method, through famous university-grade course you can follow by yourself. You receive the identical material—lecture notes and practice assignments with solutions—developed at Northwestern University and now widely used for HOME STUDY. By easy, graded steps, you go from elementary through advanced accounting, including costs, audits—even mathematics. Splendid safeguard to your business future.

Send for This FREE BOOKLET

Fill in and mail the coupon below for free booklet, "How to Get Ahead Through Accounting," with full details of unique advantages of this practical, low cost course. Write today.



Mail This Request Form

THE RONALD PRESS COMPANY
15 East 26th St., New York, N. Y. Dept. M560

Send me, without cost or obligation, a copy of the free booklet giving full information about use for Home Study of the Complete Accounting Course developed at Northwestern University. (No salesman will call.)

Name ..... Occupation .....
(Please print)

Address .....

City ..... State .....

ASK ADVENTURE

(Continued from page 8)

chanical Aptitude Test given you when you enlist, your chance of making any school of your choice immediately after recruit training is very good, and with four years of high school behind you, you should have no great trouble making a good grade on the above tests.

Other schools and trades available to you are shown in the Navy enlistment forms readily available at any Navy recruiting office, of which I am sure there is one in Brooklyn and every other large city in the country. These recruiting offices, which are in the phone book, are usually the nearest and quickest sources of information regarding enlistment in the Navy. Best of luck to you.

MacCREAGH on the grisly Gael.

Request:—Because of that letter about the kilts, and also because of the use of Gaelic in your "Pied Piper of Nairobi," I'm sending these questions to you.

Would it be possible for a man who knew the Scot Gaelic to understand Irish Gaelic, or vice versa?

Also, how about Welsh? Is there enough Gaelic base to Welsh to make it understandable to an Irishman or Scot?

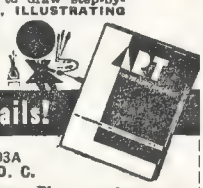
Do you know of any source-books that would give me a bit of information about the Lochlannec, or Laughlianna,

(Continued on page 118)

Be an ARTIST!

—Train at Home in Your Spare Time

The fascinating field of Art offers commercial opportunities to men and women. Trained Artists are capable of earning $30, $50, $75 a week. Learn to draw step-by-step. COMMERCIAL ART, CARTOONING, ILLUSTRATING all in one complete course. TWO ART OUTFITS FURNISHED. Write for illustrated FREE BOOK, "Art for Pleasure and Profit." No obligation.



FREE BOOK gives details!

Washington School of Art, Studio 993A
1115—15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Yes! I am interested in learning to draw. Please send me your Free Book, "Art for Pleasure and Profit."

Name ..... Age .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

AMAZING NEW LOW COST SICKNESS AND ACCIDENT POLICY INSURES YOUR WHOLE FAMILY

William Lindbloom and his family of Chicago, Ill. are protected by one of the new "United" Family Group Sickness and Accident Policies. You, too, should protect your family. Send coupon today.

Accidents are more common than you think.

Sickness may strike without warning.

4,080 people are disabled every hour, day and night.

This can happen to you.

ONLY $1 FOR ALL

Now, we offer for your whole family, this amazing, new "United" Family Group Sickness and Accident Policy. You may include each and every member of your family in one application—mother, father, children and even grandparents for the startling low cost of only $1.00 a month for the whole family. Don't wait—send the coupon today.

$7,500.00

ACCUMULATED CASH for Stated Accidental Death

Do not confuse this policy with so-called family group life policies where the entire family must die to collect maximum cash benefits. No one in your family has to die to get cash benefits from our Family Group Sickness and Accident Policy.

This wonderful, new kind of Insurance Policy pays cash benefits for any accidental death to any member of the family. It pays the applicant $25.00 weekly indemnity for SICKNESS or ACCIDENT—$25.00 weekly for HOSPITAL—and $100.00 EMERGENCY allowance and many other liberal features all as provided for in this remarkable Policy. Get a policy on our Free Inspection Offer and see for yourself that this is the best insurance, at such a low cost, that any company has dared to offer.

The United Insurance Company of Chicago is a Legal Reserve (not an assessment) Insurance Company, old and reliable. Millions already paid in claims to policyholders. $225,000.00 on deposit with Illinois Insurance Department for your protection.

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR ANYONE

Each and every member of your family may be insured and there is no medical examination required for anyone. Remember, in addition to the liberal accident features the "Family" Policy covers SICKNESS as well—it provides many other liberal benefits, all as plainly stated in the policy. This vital protection gives "United" policyholders a safeguard against the misery of lost income and increased expenses during times of adversity.

Send No Money JUST MAIL COUPON

You do not send one cent—just mail the coupon for our Free Inspection Offer. There is no obligation. Read the Policy in your own home and if you do not agree that it is the best Family Group Sickness and Accident policy for your entire family then send it back. Don't delay until it is too late. Be prepared—get your "United" Family Policy today

FREE INSPECTION OFFER

to readers of this magazine

Take advantage of this unusual opportunity to provide for the security of your family. Send the coupon today for complete information and our Free Inspection Offer. Get the facts without obligation. Mail the coupon today—Now!

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

United Insurance Co.
Elgin Tower, Suite G-40-K
Elgin, Illinois.

NO AGENT WILL CALL

Please mail me at once complete information and Free Inspection Offer of the "United" Family Group Sickness and Accident Policy. Send No Money.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Getting Up Nights Makes Many Feel Old

Do you feel older than you are or suffer from Getting Up Nights, Backache, Nervousness, Leg Pains, Dizziness, Swollen Ankles, Rheumatic Pains, Burning, scanty or frequent passages? If so, remember that your Kidneys are vital to your health and that these symptoms may be due to non-organic and non-systemic Kidney and Bladder troubles—in such cases CYSTEX (a physician's prescription) usually gives prompt and joyous relief by helping the Kidneys flush out poisonous excess acids and wastes. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose in trying Cystex. An iron-clad guarantee wrapped around each package assures a refund of your money on return of empty package unless fully satisfied. Don't take chances on any Kidney medicine that is not guaranteed. Don't delay. Get Cystex (Siss-tex) from your druggist today. Only 35c. The guarantee protects you.

Cystex Helps Flush Kidneys

don't WORRY

Why put up with years of needless discomfort and worry? Try a Brooks Automatic Air Cushion. This marvelous appliance permits the opening to close, yet holds reducible rupture securely, comfortably—day and night. Thousands report amazing results. Light, neat-fitting. No hard pads or stiff springs to chafe or gouge. Made for men, women and children. Durable, cheap, **Sent on trial** to prove it. Never sold in stores. Beware of imitations. Write for Free Book on Rupture, no-risk trial order plan, and proof of results. All correspondence confidential.

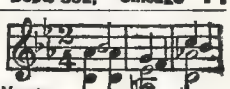
BROOKS COMPANY, 159-B State St., Marshall, Mich.

WE MATCH PANTS ToAnySuit!

Double the life of your coat and vest with correctly matched pants. 100,000 patterns. Every pair hand tailored to your measure. Our match sent FREE for your O. K. before pants are made. Fit guaranteed. Send piece of cloth or vest today.

SUPERIOR MATCH PANTS COMPANY
209 S. State St. Dept. 352, Chicago

LEARN



Piano, Violin, Cornet, Trumpet, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, Organ, Accordion, Saxophone, Clarinet. SIMPLIFIED HOME STUDY METHOD—conservatory grade. Successfully tried courses for beginners. ATTRACTIVELY PRICED—convenient payment plan. Free catalog. If juvenile, parent's signature must accompany inquiry.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC
Dept. 157-N 1525 East 53rd St., Chicago, Ill.

EYE GLASSES BY MAIL

GLASSES as LOW as $1.95 PAIR

16 DAYS TRIAL

Choice of the LATEST STYLES—remarkably LOW PRICES. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED or your money back. If you are not satisfied—they will not cost you a cent.

SEND NO MONEY Write for FREE catalog today showing all of our many styles and LOW PRICES!

BROKEN GLASSES REPAIRED AT LOW COST!

ADVANCE SPECTACLE CO.
537 S. Dearborn St., Dept. PP-3 Chicago, Ill.

(Continued from page 116)

who were sea-raiders who made forays on the Scotch and Irish coasts in legendary times? Although they are usually identified with the Norsemen, they seem to have antedated the time when the Scandinavian peoples took to the sea.

—F. A. Partridge,
Auburn, Calif.

Reply by Gordon MacCreagh:—Certainly a Scots Gael would understand an Irish Gael. The difference is mostly in the pronunciation and in some genetives and plural suffixes. None of which matters a helluva lot; for Gaelic is a grisly language of more exceptions than rules, and, barring some purist professor, is misspoken by the yokelry according to local lack of education.

For instance—		*Scots*	*Irish*
Bean woman	Nom.	a b h e a n — the woman	an bean
	Gen.	na mnatha — of the woman	na mna
	Dat.	a' n' mhnaoi — to the woman	a'n mnaoi
	Acc.	a b h e a n — the woman	an bean
	Voc.	Ah bhean — Oh the woman	A bhean

I could be wrong about the exact Erse. There is no Ablative.

I would not devastate you with plural forms which are beyond all sane concept. As a matter of letting you in on the sheer horror of what grammarians can do, I will cite only: *Piuthair*, a sister, makes a simple plural, *Peathraicheann.*

This only to warn you to shudder away from Welsh whilst you yet have your mind. Gaels, thank God, do not understand the Cymric.

No, I know nothing about the Loch-Lanneca, except that, speaking of them as a people, composite plural, would call for the final *a* suffix. Well? The abstruse gent who does know will probably never read your story. So go ahead and invent your pre-Norse pirates with the limitless sky above you. Suppose some erudite modern MacLaughlin writes belligerently; tell him that his source book is just plumb wrong and that your *leabhar nan Diathan sean*, which means The Book of the Ancient Gods, of which you possess the only copy, says different.

Anyway, what d'you want to know with Scots and Irish Gaels in pre-Norse times? The language then spoken was Pictish, now providentially lost. Nor did the sea-roving Norsemen speak Scandahoovian; they babbled Gothic. Hell, man, all that limits you is your imagination.

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Boxing—MAJOR JEAN V. GROMBACH, Headquarters, 27th Div., Fort McClellan, Ala.

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing: *paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 1325 So. Main St., Princeton, Ill.

Coins: *and Medals*—WILLIAM L. CLARK American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—MAJOR JEAN V. GROMBACH, Headquarters, 27th Div., Fort McClellan, Ala.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing: *salt water, bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Globe-trotting and vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure.*

Health Building Activities, Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling—*regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 70 Colonial Sq., Burlington, Vt.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson Av., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

★**Skiing and Snowshoeing**—W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec, Can.

"Haven't got what it takes? Who? ME?"

Yes, it often *is* a shock to discover what others really think about you. And while they may be completely wrong, still . . .

Why not *prove* that you're going places—why not make more money?

Do you *dare* say you lack the opportunity when thousands are winning raises, promotion, through LaSalle's new home-study training?

Let us send you free that fascinating book: "Ten Years' Promotion in One." Write for it *today!* There's no obligation—nothing but a challenge, an inspiration, that can make money for you!

Ask also for one of these interesting books on *your* chosen field.

LaSalle Extension University

A Correspondence Institution

Dept. 3334-R, Chicago

Please send me, without cost or obligation, "Ten Years' Promotion in One" and also the book on the business field checked below:

☐ Accountancy ☐ Law ☐ Traffic Mgt.
☐ Business Mgt. ☐ Modern Salesmanship

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____

Men, Women! Old at 40, 50, 60! Get Pep

Feel Years Younger, Full of Vim

Don't blame exhausted, worn-out, run-down feeling on your age. Thousands amazed at what a little pepping up with Ostrex will do. Contains general tonics often needed after 40—by bodies lacking iron, calcium phosphate, Vitamin B_1. A 73-year-old doctor writes: "I took it myself. Results fine." Introductory size Ostrex Tonic Tablets *only* 35c. Stop feeling pepless, old. Start feeling peppier, younger, this very day. At all good drug stores everywhere.

SUCTION SPONGE

Cleans Cars New Way!

AMAZING INVENTION! Banishes auto-washing drudgery. Cleans linoleum, woodwork, windows like a flash. Auto owners, housewives wild about it. HOT SELLER FOR AGENTS AND DISTRIBUTORS. Hustlers cleaning up big money.

SAMPLE OFFER Samples sent on trial to first person in each locality who writes. No obligation. Get details. Be first—send in your name TODAY!

KRISTEE CO., 667 Kristee Bldg., Akron, O.

8 Mile Range - Wide Vision

BINOCULARS $4.75

15 DAYS FREE TRIAL

Post Paid or C. O. D.

Comes complete with case and straps. Well ground powerful lens. Easily focused for all distances and eye widths. Latest features. Ideal all-weather binoculars. Guaranteed. If not satisfied after 15 days trial, money refunded.

Vogue Binocular Co. 8420 S. Ashland Dept. 341 Chicago

"Attractive Proposition for Agents"

FALSE TEETH *Low as* $6.85

90 DAYS TRIAL

TEST THEM

EXAMINE THEM

We make FALSE TEETH for you BY MAIL from your mouth-impression! Money-Back GUARANTEE of Satisfaction. FREE impression material, directions. Booklet of New Styles and Information. Write today to

FREE

SEND NO MONEY

PARKER DENTAL LAB., 127 N. DEARBORN ST., DEPT. 268, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

FREE SAMPLES OF REMARKABLE TREATMENT FOR

Stomach Pains

DUE TO GASTRIC HYPERACIDITY

H. H. Bromley, of Shelbourne, Vt., writes: "I suffered for years with acid stomach trouble. My doctors told me I had acid stomach ulcers and would have to diet the rest of my life. Before taking your treatment I had lost a lot of weight and could eat nothing but soft foods and milk. After taking Von's Tablets I felt perfectly well, ate almost anything and gained back the weight I had lost." If you suffer from indigestion, gastritis, heartburn, bloating or any other stomach trouble due to gastric hyperacidity, you too, should try Von's for prompt relief. Send for FREE Samples of this remarkable treatment and details of trial offer with money back guarantee. Instructive Booklet is included. Write:

PHILADELPHIA VON CO. Dept. 310-J

Fox Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

MAKE MONEY

***WITH* NASH CUSTOM TAILORED CLOTHES**

Be your own Sales Manager, take orders; earn money with this famous make of clothes. High quality men's tailoring at popular prices.

WRITE! Write in today. Territories open.

THE A. NASH COMPANY

1914 ELM STREET • CINCINNATI, OHIO

Small Boating: *skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: *spears, pole arms and armor*—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure*.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, New York City.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders* — MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: *guides and equipment*—ERNEST W SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

Forestry: *in the United States, national forests of the Rocky Mountain States*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: *tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, 1091 Springdale Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: *ship modeling*—CHAS H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *anywhere in No. America. Outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, 11628¾ Mayfield Ave., West Los Angeles, Calif.

The Merchant Marine. GORDON MACALLISTER, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: *birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure*.

Railroads: *in the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 156 Joralemon St., Belleville, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

Field Artillery, *the Cavalry Arm, Equitation and training of horses*—FAIRFAX DOWNEY, care of *Adventure.*

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edw H. S., Vancouver, B. C.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J.

U. S. Marine Corps—MAJOR F. W. HOPKINS, care of *Adventure*

U. S. Navy—LIEUT. DURAND KIEFER, care of *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★**New Guinea**—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

★**New Zealand: Cook Island, Samoa**—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★**Australia and Tasmania**—ALAN FOLEY, 18a Sandridge St., Bondi, Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands**—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Ingle Nook," 39 Cornelia St., Wiley Park, N. S. W.

Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, Hawaii.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York City.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** *Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya.*—GORDON MACCREAGH, 2231 W. Harbor Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans.*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa.*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia.*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durbin, Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon.*—V. B. WINDLE, care of *Adventure.* **2** *French Indo-China, Hong Kong, Macao, Tibet, Southern, Eastern and Central China.*—SEWARD S. CRAMER, care of *Adventure.* **3** *Northern China and Mongolia.*—PAUL H. FRANSON, Bldg No. 8 Veterans Administration Facility, Minneapolis, Minn. **4** *Persia, Arabia.*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Palestine.*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

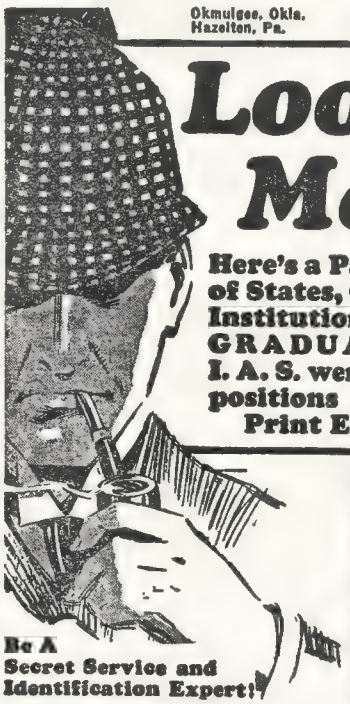
Europe, Part 1 *Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia.*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure.*

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure.*

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure.* **2** *Venezuela, The Guianas, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.*—DR. PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

★**West Indies**—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure.*



Okmulgee, Okla.
Hazelton, Pa.
Des Moines, Iowa
Sioux City, Iowa

Look Men!

Here's a Partial List of States, Cities and Institutions in which GRADUATES of I. A. S. were placed in positions as Finger Print Experts!

Be A Secret Service and Identification Expert!

State of Wash.
State of Michigan
State of Utah
State of Ohio
Duluth, Minn.
Detroit, Mich.
Pueblo, Colo.
Idaho Falls, Idaho
Ogden, Utah
Lorain Co., Ohio
St. Paul, Minn.
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lincoln, Nebr.
Birmingham, Ala.
Columbus, Ohio
Havana, Cuba
New Haven, Conn.
Great Falls, Mont.
Galveston, Texas
Pensacola, Fla.
Stillwater, Okla.

Calgary, Alta., Can.
Houston, Texas
Waterloo, Iowa
Victoria, B. C.
Baton Rouge, La.
Atlantic City, N. J.
E. Lansing, Mich.
Globe, Arizona
London, Ont., Can.
Henryetta, Okla.
Seattle, Wash.
Ferndale, Mich.
McAlester, Okla.
Negaunee, Mich.
Lawton, Okla.
Crown Point, Ind.
Bay City, Mich.
Roanoke, Va.
Glendale, Calif.
Hawaiian Islands
Drumright, Okla.

Miami, Florida
Orlando, Florida
York, Pa.
El Paso, Texas
Everett, Wash.
Schenectady, N. Y.
Alhambra, Calif.
Livingston, Mont.
Saginaw, Mich.
Fort Collins, Colo.
Bedford, Ohio
Huntington, W. Va.
Salt Lake City, U.
Taft, California
Jamestown, N. Y.
Phoenixville, Pa.
Rochester, N. Y.
Media, Pa.
Dayton, Ohio
East Chicago, Ind.
Green Bay, Wis.
Nocona, Texas
Neenah, Wis.
Kingfisher, Okla.
Centralia, Wash.
Bismarck, N. D.
Bloomington, Ind.
Cuyahoga Falls, O.
Rock Island, Ill.
Philadelphia, Pa.
Astoria, Oregon
Pendleton, Ind.
St. Joseph, Mo.
State of Illinois
State of Iowa
State of Idaho
State of Colorado
Lima, Ohio
Selma, N. C.

Want a Regular Monthly Salary?

Investigate this opportunity to earn a regular monthly salary and share in Rewards. You will receive the same course as our hundreds of graduates who are *now* holding positions in the partial list of States, Cities and Institutions shown here. And one to fifteen I. A. S. Graduates are employed on regular monthly salaries by each bureau listed. Be a Finger Print and Secret Service Operator! Write for Free details how you can train at home in spare time to enter this young, swiftly-growing profession.

FREE ***The Confidential Reports Operator No. 38 Made to his Chief!***

Write or send coupon for Free Reports and Illustrated Finger Print Book . . . the same information requested by *hundreds* of I. A. S. graduates now earning a monthly salary!

Institute of Applied Science, Dept. 7383
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:—Without any obligation on my part whatever, send me the Reports of Operator No. 38, also your illustrated Free Book on Finger Prints and your low prices and Easy Terms Offer. Literature will be sent only to persons stating their age.

Name----------

Address---------- *Age*----------

INDIGESTION

may excite the Heart

Gas trapped in the stomach or gullet may act like a hair-trigger on the heart action. At the first sign of distress smart men and women depend on Bell-ans Tablets to set gas free. No laxative but made of the fastest acting medicines known for symptomatic relief of gastric hyperacidity. If the FIRST TRIAL doesn't prove Bell-ans better, return bottle to us and receive DOUBLE Money Back. 25c at all drug stores.

HAND COLORED In Oil PHOTO ENLARGEMENT

Beautifully mounted in 7 x 9 white frame mat. Made from any photograph, snapshot or negative. Original returned. Send 25c and stamp—no other charges.

25c PLUS 3c STAMP for Mailing

COLORGRAPH, Dept. LM-21, 17 N. LeClaire, Chicago

High School Course at Home

Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H349, Drexel at 58th, Chicago

AMAZING GROFLEX SHOES NEED NO BREAKING IN

Soft as a Glove

EARN BIG COMMISSIONS AND YOUR OWN SHOES AS BONUS

Steady income showing complete shoe line for men, women, children. Over 200 styles include famous Cushion shoes; amazing GROFLEX shoes that need no breaking in; popular new MILITARY styles; HITE-BUILDERS that make men look taller; dozens of other fast selling features. Big cash commissions, liberal bonus. Amazing values, fully guaranteed. No experience needed. Samples without cost. Write TODAY for full information, money-making plan and FREE selling kit.

WRITE FOR FREE OUTFIT

TANNERS SHOE COMPANY, 406 Boston, Mass.

PHOTO RING

A SENSATION! Send any snapshot or photo and we'll reproduce it in this beautiful onyx-like ring with new magnified setting! Enclose strip of paper for ring size. Pay postman plus a few cents postage. If you send cash we pay postage. Canadians Send Money Order. Add 5c Fed. Tax.

48c (Hand Painted 10c extra)

Photomovette Ring Co., Dept. P-16, P.O. Box 412, Cincinnati, O.

SONG POEM

WRITERS: Send us your original poem, Mother, Home, Love, Sacred, Patriotic, Comic or any subject, for our plan and FREE Rhyming Dictionary at once.

RICHARD BROS., 30-A Woods Building, Chicago, Illinois.

ASTHMA

and BRONCHITIS Medicine. Write today for free information and special money back offer.

W. K. STERLINE 610 Ohio Ave., SIDNEY, OHIO

SELL TIES—OVER 100% PROFIT

$1 STARTS YOU IN BUSINESS

Silk Lined Ties, Sample Tie 15c. Doz. $1.50
Slyde-On Ties, Sample Tie 25c. Doz. $2.40
Hand-Made Ties, Sample Tie 35c. Doz. $3.90

25% deposit, balance C.O.D. Write for FREE wholesale catalog.

PHILIP'S NECKWEAR, 30 West 22nd St., Dept. M-2, New York

ITCH STOPPED in a Jiffy or Money Back

For quick relief from itching of eczema, pimples, athlete's foot, scales, scabies, rashes and other externally caused skin troubles, use world-famous, cooling, antiseptic, liquid D. D. D. Prescription. Greaseless, stainless. Soothes irritation and quickly stops the most intense itching. 35c trial bottle proves it, or money back. Ask your druggist today for D. D. D. PRESCRIPTION.

Baffinland and Greenland — VICTOR SHAW, 11628¾ Mayfield Av., West Los Angeles, Calif.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, Severna Park, Md.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States.*—J. W. WHITAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. 2 *Quintana Roo, Yucatan Campeche.*—W. RUSSELL SHEETS, 301 Poplar Ave., Takoma Prk., Md.

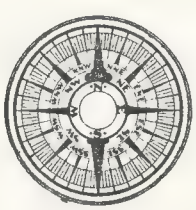
Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec.*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 24 Plessis St., Quebec, Canada. 2 ★*Height of Land Region, Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec. Southeastern Ungava and Keewatin.*—S. E. SANGSTER, care of *Adventure.* 3 ★*Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario.*—HARRY M. MOORE, *The Courier Advocate,* Trenton, Ont., Canada. 4 ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping.*—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 1163 Victoria Rd., Walkerville, Ont., Canada. 5 *Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C. 6 *Northern Saskatchewan Indian life and language, hunting, trapping.*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501—10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson ave., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure.* 3 *New Mexico (Indians, etc.)*—H F. ROBINSON, 1211 W. Roma Ave., Albuquerque, N M. 4 *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev 5 *Idaho and environs.*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. 6 *Arizona, Utah.*—C. C. ANDERSON, care of *Adventure.* 7 *Texas, Oklahoma.*—J. W. WHITAKER, 203 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River.*—GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton, P. O., Ingram, Pa. 3 *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. 2 *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 40 Chapel St., Woodmont, Conn. 3 *Adirondacks,* New York.—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif 4 *New Jersey.*—F. H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J. 5 *Ala., Tenn. Miss., N C., S C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care *Adventure.* 6 *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia.*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.



LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to Lost Trails will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or for any other reason in the judgment of the editorial staff. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Would like to hear from my good friend Bert A. Landon, formerly of Teaneck, N. J. I left New Jersey about 5 years ago and the only information I have about him is that he most likely is residing in California. Charles F. Lupton, 46 Chestnut St., Lockport, N. Y.

Would like to hear from any of my old friends who served with me in the 59th C.A.C. or the 31st Inf. in the Philippines and China from 1930 to 1932. Also any of the boys who knew me at Fort Missoula, Mont. Charles Pinkerton, Grandview San., Moundsville, W. Va.

Would like to locate my uncle, Joseph L. Campbell, generally called Shorty Campbell. Age 64, height 5 ft. 4½ in.; practically bald; pipe smoker, and fond of children. Last seen in August, 1931, at Texarkana, Tex. Please communicate with Joseph L. Pyles, Box 336, Lordsburg, N. M.

I would like to contact members of the crew of U. S. S. Alabama, 1900 to 1905. J. D. McCulley, Seaman, U. S. S. Alabama, 849 Aberdeen Street, Akron, Ohio.

Would like to contact some of the boys who were in Clear Creek CCC Camp, S-53, Co.353, at Sigel, Pa. Will be glad to hear from any of the officers or boys. Write to Edward "Baldy" Stankosky, 369 Main St., New Britain, Conn.

John Todd, formerly of Woodstock, Vermont, who worked with me in Chicago in 1937, and was last heard of in South Bend, Ind. Please get in touch with your old friend, Bill Gean, Box 6, Mencen, Pa. Very important news for you.

TRAINED MEN NEEDED IN ELECTRICITY AND RADIO

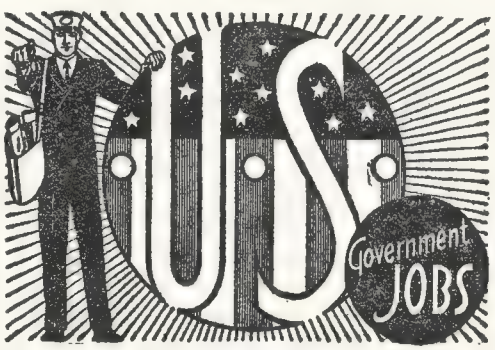
"LEARN BY DOING" IN THE FAMOUS COYNE TRAINING SHOPS

"I'LL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING"

PRACTICAL TRAINING ON FULL SIZE EQUIPMENT. NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OR ADVANCED EDUCATION NEEDED. MAIL COUPON NOW FOR BIG FREE BOOK. LEARN ABOUT THE "PAY AFTER GRADUATION PLAN" "PART TIME EMPLOYMENT PLAN" AND "JOB AFTER GRADUATION SERVICE."

MAIL COUPON TODAY FOR BIG FREE BOOK AND ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT COYNE TRAINING AND THE OFFERS I'M MAKING TO HELP FELLOWS GET AHEAD.

H. C. LEWIS, PRES. COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 SO. PAULINA ST.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, DEPT. 32-76
SEND FREE BOOK AND ALL THE FACTS ON COURSE CHECKED BELOW.
☐ ELECTRICITY ☐ RADIO
NAME .....
ADDRESS .....
CITY ..... STATE .....



START
$1260 to $2100 YEAR

DEFENSE PROGRAM INCREASING APPOINTMENTS
● MEN—WOMEN

32 Page Civil Service Book—FREE—Prepare now at home for 1942 Examinations

Mail Coupon Today—SURE

COUPON

Franklin Institute
Dept. G175
Rochester, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Rush to me, FREE of charge, list of U. S. Government big pay jobs. Send FREE 32-page book describing salaries, vacations, hours, work, etc. Tell me how to qualify for one of these jobs.

Name .....
Address .....

SAVE ON TIRES

BUY NOW

Before Rubber Goes Higher

GOODYEAR-FIRESTONE

GOODRICH-FISK-U.S.

And Other Standard Makes

$2.25 ea.

National Defense calls for rubber conservation! Crude rubber prices are up! Tires are getting scarcer daily. **Our Standard Brand** reconditioned tires, serviceably repaired by experts with high-grade materials, will solve the tire problem for you. Only our **26 years' experience** and volume sales make these **low prices** possible. Take advantage of them today. Don't delay, ORDER NOW.

BALLOON TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
29x4.40-21	$2.25	$1.05
29x4.50-20	2.35	1.06
30x4.50-21	2.40	1.16
28x4.75-19	2.45	1.25
29x4.75-20	2.50	1.25
29x5.00-19	2.85	1.25
30x5.00-20	2.85	1.25
5.25-17	2.90	1.35
28x5.25-18	2.90	1.35
29x5.25-19	2.95	1.35
30x5.25-20	2.95	1.35
31x5.25-21	3.25	1.35
5.50-17	3.35	1.40
28x5.50-19	3.35	1.40
29x5.50-19	3.35	1.45
6.00-16	3.75	1.45
6.00-17	3.40	1.40
30x6.00-18	3.40	1.40
31x6.00-19	3.40	1.45
32x6.00-20	3.45	1.55
33x6.00-21	3.65	1.55
32x6.50-20	3.75	1.75

UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE

Our Guarantee Bond agrees to replace at half price tires failing for any reason whatsoever, to give full 9 months' service. Replacements f. o. b. Chicago.

TRUCK BALLOONS

Size	Tires	Tubes
6.00-20	$4.25	$1.65
6.50-20	4.45	1.95
7.00-20	5.95	2.95
7.50-20	6.95	3.75
8.25-20	9.95	5.65
9.00-20	10.95	5.95

ORDER TODAY

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
30x5	$4.25	$1.95
32x6	7.95	2.95
34x7	10.95	4.65
38x7	10.95	4.65
36x8	11.45	4.95
40x8	13.25	4.95

ALL OTHER SIZES

SEND ONLY $1.00 DEPOSIT on each tire ordered. ($3.00 on each Truck Tire.) We ship balance C. O. D. Deduct **5 per cent** if cash is sent in full with order. To fill order promptly we may substitute brands if necessary. ALL TUBES BRAND NEW—GUARANTEED—

PERRY-FIELD TIRE & RUBBER CO.

1720 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 5371-A, Chicago

LEARN MONEY-MAKING CARTOONING

Same Simplified Method that has helped train creators of "Terry & Pirates," "Wash Tubbs," "Out Our Way," "Winnie Winkle," "Reg'lar Fellers," "Strange As It Seems," "Secret Agent X-9," and many others. Earn while learning. Rush 10c for Picture Chart to test your ability, and full details. (State age.)

THE LANDON SCHOOL, 4283 Nat'l Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio

WANTED—MEN

to cast 5 and 10c Novelties, Toy Air Planes, Ashtrays, etc. Can be done in any spare room, basement or garage and no experience necessary. A rare opportunity for 1942 to devote spare or full time to profitable work. Apply only if over 21.

METAL CAST PRODUCTS CO., Dept. T

1696 Boston Road New York, N. Y

FREE CHART

STUFFED-UP NOSE

If thick, gummy mucus plugs your nose—causes morning hawking, coughing—loosen and liquefy it with HALL'S TWO-METHOD TREATMENT—soothes and cools. Ask your Druggist. Satisfaction or money back!

Send postcard for FREE Health Chart TODAY!

F. J. CHENEY & CO. Dept. P-3, TOLEDO, OHIO

RUPTURED?

Get Relief This Proven Way

Why try to worry along with trusses that gouge your flesh—press heavily on hips and spine—enlarge opening—fail to hold rupture? You need the Cluthe. No leg-straps or cutting belts. Automatic adjustable pad holds at real opening—follows every body movement with instant increased support in case of strain. Cannot slip whether at work or play. Light. Waterproof. Can be worn in bath. Send for amazing FREE book "Advice To Ruptured" and details of liberal truthful 60-day trial offer. Also endorsements from grateful users in your neighborhood. Write: CLUTHE SONS, Dept. 15, Bloomfield, New Jersey

$7.95 60 DAYS TRIAL

FALSE TEETH

AS LOW AS $7.95

Per Plate. Dental plates are made in our own laboratory from your personal impression. WORKMANSHIP and Material **GUARANTEED** or PURCHASE PRICE REFUNDED. We take this risk on our 60-Day Trial Offer.

DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY Mail post card for **FREE** material and catalog of our LOW PRICES. DON'T PUT IT OFF — Write us today!

BRIGHTON-THOMAS DENTAL LABORATORY

DEPT. 1055 6217 S. HALSTED STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.

(Continued from page 115)

WE hazarded a guess in the December *Camp-Fire* that Walter Livingston's "Riders East" would generate a few sparks in the way of letters from readers. The letters poured in all right and the sparks lit right in the lap of our proofreading department and, to mix a metaphor, are our faces red! The omission of one little three-letter word caused all the uproar, as indeed it should have!

"The Government was generosity itself, loaning the Ninth Cavalry Band and bringing from a nearby reservation some five hundred of the Sioux, many of whom had scalped other soldiers at the Custer Massacre at Wounded Knee Creek some years earlier," read a paragraph from the Livingston article. It should have read ". . . at the Custer Massacre *and* at Wounded Knee, etc." To the dozen or so alert readers who reminded us that the Custer engagement occurred at the Little Big Horn some fifteen years before Wounded Knee, all thanks. We felt particularly embarrassed because it was only a few issues ago that we published the chapter on Custer from Fairfax Downey's new book, and the whole thing was fresh in our minds—or should have been. Now watch us keep an eagle eye on our conjunctions in the future!

We print herewith excerpts from two interesting letters referring to "Riders East" (the writers of both, incidentally, spotted the Wounded Knee error) and hope to have room for more next month. Bernal R. Camp of Lincoln, Nebraska writes—

> I enjoyed reading "Riders East" and thought it was a swell job. However, in the interests of accuracy, I'd like to offer a correction of some points in the story. I am somewhat of an amateur historian, and have made a rather extensive study of the Old West. In my research I have accumulated a number of facts about the infamous Doc Middleton.
>
> Mr. Livingston describes Middleton as "long, lean, and sinewy." Those who knew him described him as follows: of slight build, with light brown hair, light complexion, dark hazel eyes, black beard and moustache. Livingston's story would give the impression Middleton was something over six feet. His measurements when sent to the Nebraska state peni-

tentiary are listed as 5 feet 9¾ inches in height, indicating he was a rather small man.

Livingston says that Doc Middleton was suspected of being an active horse-thief at the time of the Chadron-Chicago race. However, the records would indicate that his horse thief days were at least 10 years behind him. He was arrested during the summer of 1879 and tried in Laramie County, Wyoming Territory. Since Wyoming did not at that time have a state penitentiary, he was committed to the Nebraska State Penitentiary, with the State of Wyoming paying for his keep. This seems to have been a general practice during the time before Wyoming had its own state penitentiary. Middleton was checked in at the Nebraska penitentiary September 29, 1879, carrying a sentence of five years. He was discharged, however June 18, 1883, after having shown himself a model prisoner. There is no record of Middleton ever having been suspected of returning to his old "profession." It is known however that he did not stay on the right side of the law. He is known to have turned to liquor running. Shortly before the Wounded Knee affair, Middleton was seen in an army encampment, and was at that time driving a spring wagon which was loaded down with chickens inside which he had concealed whiskey flasks. In spite of military regulations, he got past the camp sentries and sold his "chickens" quickly and successfully got out of the encampment again. His liquor running seems to have been a sideline to his gambling, for he was ostensibly a gambler after the years he left the penitentiary. Apparently, Middleton carried on his liquor business to the end of his days, for he was arrested at Douglas, Wyoming, by Sheriff A. W. Peyton of Converse county for operating a "blind pig." This was November 5, 1913. While in jail, he came down with erysipelas and died in the pest house, November 25, 1913. He was buried in Potters field. He was known as the "man with the golden tooth" since one of his front teeth was broken off and built up with gold.

Doc Middleton was one of the most successful horsethieves ever to ride through the West. In a period of two years, he and his gang stole upwards from 2,000 horses, including Sioux ponies. He made horse thievery a paying business.

He started on his outlaw career after killing a soldier in a brawl at Saratoga house in Sidney, Nebraska, in 1877. At

SAVE UP TO 50% FACTORY-TO-YOU
PUSH-BUTTON TUNING
9 BANDS (ON 6 DIAL SCALES)
20 TIMES EASIER FOREIGN TUNING with SUPER BAND SPREAD RADIO!
PUT THIS CHASSIS IN YOUR PRESENT CABINET
$19.75 COMPLETE
with SPEAKER, TUBES, PUSH-BUTTON TUNING, MAGNA-TENNA LOOP AERIAL, READY TO PLAY
UP TO $50.00 TRADE-IN
THINK of it . . . 20 times easier to tune . . . 10 times more sensitive than ordinary radios! Crystal-Clear High Fidelity Tone. Famous 30-day trial plan fully protects you and enables you to prove Midwest's amazing new 1942 Super Spread Band performance in your own home, without obligation. Write today. Your name on a 1¢ postal card will do.
Send for big FREE 1942 Catalog, showing Radios, Radio-Phonos, Home Recorders — from $12.95 to $212.50.
9 BAND CONSOLE $43.95 COMPLETE
30 DAYS TRIAL
UP TO 16 TUBES
E-Z TERMS
USER AGENTS WANTED
MIDWEST RADIO CORPORATION
DEPT. 98-F CINCINNATI, OHIO

Learn this Profitable Profession
in 90 Days at Home
Hundreds of men and women of all ages 18-50 make $10.00 to $20.00 in a single day giving scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is a big demand from Hospitals, Sanitariums, Clubs, Doctors and private patients as well as opportunities for establishing your own office. Learn this interesting money-making profession in your own home by mail through our home study course. Same instructors as in our NATIONALLY KNOWN resident school. A diploma is awarded upon completion of the course. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. High School training is not necessary. Many earn big money while learning.
Anatomy Charts
Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE
Enroll now and we will include uniform coat, medical dictionary, patented reducing roller and Hydro-Therapy supplies without extra cost. The reducing course alone may be worth many times the modest tuition fee. Send coupon now for Anatomy Charts and booklet containing photographs and letters from successful graduates. These will all be sent postpaid—FREE.
THE College of Swedish Massage
(Successor to National College of Massage)
Dept. 395 —30 E. Adams St., Chicago.
You may send me FREE and postpaid Anatomy Charts, booklet containing photographs and letters from graduates, and complete details of your offer.
Name .....
Address .....
City ..... State .....

CUT OUT AND MAIL THIS AD
FOR BIG $5 ASS'T
FOODS & PRODUCTS FREE!

SEND NO MONEY!
Just cut out and mail this ad with your name and address for big $5.00 Assortment of full size packages of Foods, Groceries, Soaps, etc.—yours ABSOLUTELY FREE! Show products to friends, neighbors—earn big cash profits in full or spare time, taking orders for bargains in more than 200 home necessities. No experience needed. You don't pay us one cent. I supply everything—ABSOLUTELY FREE—to start you earning money including big $5.00 Assortment of actual Products and easy money-making plans. Cut this ad out NOW and mail it with your name and address for your big FREE Assortment.
ZANOL 4987 Monmouth Cincinnati, Ohio

NEW ZIPPER SHOE
Sensation in shoes!
"Clipper" ZIPS on and off instantly. Now's the time to build yourself a highly profitable shoe business with Clipper and 249 other sensational shoe styles for men and women. Dress—work—sport shoes. Prices low as $2.98. Extremely liberal profit for you. Complete sales outfit absolutely FREE. Write now.
MASON SHOE MFG. CO.
Dept. M-20
Chippewa Falls, Wis.
ZIPS ON ZIPS OFF
SALESMEN WANTED BIG PAY EVERY DAY

Sinus-Catarrh-Head Colds
TRY THIS TO CLEAN THE NASAL CONGESTION
Flood the nasal passage with SINASIPTEC. Different, it loosens and flushes out the thick, sticky, mucous secretion that often blocks drainage and causes headache pressure. Promotes easy breathing as it cools and soothes hot, irritated, swollen nasal tissue. Money back if first bottle doesn't convince you.
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY 25c MAIL OFFER
Send only 25c coin with your name, address for demonstration size of the regularly $1 SINASIPTEC plus a 25c value nasal applicator free of all extra charges. Write direct to American Drug Corp., Dept. A-13 6060 Maple, St. Louis, Mo.

FALSE TEETH
LOW AS $7.95
90 DAYS' TRIAL
TEST THEM
EXAMINE THEM
We make FALSE TEETH for you by mail from your own impressions. You have satisfaction or MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE. Customers in United States and Canada report satisfaction but you be your own judge.
SEND NO MONEY
WRITE TODAY for FREE BOOKLET and MATERIAL
CLEVELAND DENTAL SUPPLY COMPANY
Dept. 48-C2, East St. Louis, Illinois

TOMBSTONES
DIRECT TO YOU
Honor the grave of your loved one with beautiful Rockdale Monuments and Markers. Low cost—guaranteed satisfaction or money back—Free lettering. Send for Free Catalog and compare our prices.
WE PAY THE FREIGHT
Rockdale Monument Company,
Dept. 957, Joliet, Ill.
EASY TERMS
$9.95 AND UP
CHILDS

that time Sidney, an outfitting point for the Black Hills-Deadwood traffic, was one of the wildest and roughest towns in the West, with bad men from everywhere walking its streets in defiance of all attempts of the law to maintain order. After the killing he fled, pursued by troops from Fort Sidney, making good his escape.

And Will M. Maupin, Editor of the Clay County Sun, Clay County, Nebraska writes—

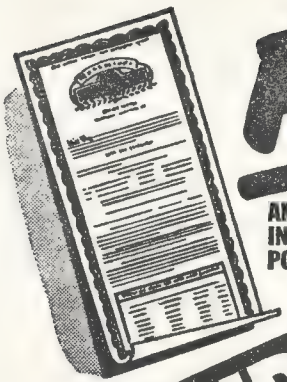
Speaking of coincidences—a couple of weeks before the December issue of *Adventure* appeared on the newsstands hereabouts, I asked this question in a syndicate letter I supply to a number of Nebraska newspapers other than my own: "Does any one remember the participants in the famous cowboy race from Chadron to the Chicago exposition in 1893?" And a day or two ago I picked up the December number of *Adventure* and there they were!

There are two or three inaccuracies and an omission or two in Mr. Livingston's story. It was inaccurate to say that an "impoverished editor" wrote the story to fill the space left vacant by a cancelled advertisement. Country editors in that day were never impoverished. They may have been poor, but never impoverished. And in those days he didn't have to write to fill space. Dammit, the "boiler plate" was always handy. Don't I know!

The idea of that historic race was born in the fertile imagination of John Maher, at that time a court reporter for the district judge who served Dawes county. John and James C. Dahlman, Sheriff of Dawes County, were cronies. Together they cooked up the story and the editor of the Chadron Journal, Rev. Mr. Julian, a Congregational minister, published it. At that time I was walloping the pavements as a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald, and knowing most of the participants in the big scheme I helped it along as best I could by promoting it in the columns of the W-H.

After serving as Sheriff of Dawes county for several terms Jim Dahlman moved to Omaha and became a commission buyer at the South Omaha stockyards. Later he served six or seven sucessive terms as Mayor of Omaha, and was the Democratic nominee for Gover-

(Continued on page 128)



FREE!

SEND NO MONEY

Just mail coupon below. You get *actual* Westminster Family Group Life Insurance Policy FREE. No Medical Examination. No Agent Will Call. No Obligation.

AMAZING NEW DOLLAR-A-MONTH INSURANCE POLICY

INSURES WHOLE FAMILY

Ages 1 to 80

Only **$1.00 PER MONTH**

If there are two or more in your family, and if you are all in good health, here is a great life insurance offer that should interest you tremendously. Now your entire family . . . father, mother, grandparents, sister, brother and baby, as many as six persons in one family, between the ages of 1 to 80, all may be insured in one single policy for a premium of only $1 a month for all! This is the new family group insurance you have been hearing so much about. So please read below and learn the facts concerning family group insurance . . . how it works, and why so many thousands of families in good health are finding it the money-saving answer to their life insurance problems.

Parents, Children (Married or Unmarried), **Sisters, Brothers, Grandparents**
ANY RELATIVES *Up to Six Members May Be Included In This* **ONE SINGLE LIFE INSURANCE POLICY!**
(Members of the family group do not have to live under the same roof)

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION
NO AGENT WILL CALL

If you or some member of your family "passed on" today, would there be the ready cash so urgently needed? We all believe in life insurance, but, unfortunately, we keep putting it off. We say it costs too much right now when we have so many other expenses, or we don't like the red tape, the medical examinations, the agent's calls. Or maybe dad carries a little insurance . . . later on we will insure mother and the rest of the family. It's so easy to find excuses for not taking out insurance. And then . . . tragedy! Urgently, money is needed . . . but we're too late.

New Policy Big Hit!

The Westminster Life Insurance Company is offering a new life insurance policy that's making a big hit with this magazine's Readers. This new type insurance overcomes practically every objection you might have to insuring your entire family now.

First, if your family is in good health, Westminster will insure your entire family in one policy, ages 1 to 80.

Second, there is no medical examination, no agent will call. There are no individual applications, no red tape. We send you the actual policy FREE! Send no money now . . . only after you have made up your mind that this Policy is the wise and sound choice, you may send in your dollar premium payment putting your policy in force.

Pays Double . . . Pays Triple

Third, this new Westminster policy pays double and triple indemnities as shown below.

Fourth, the complete premium is only $1 a month, just once a month you invest a dollar bill, that's all, and your entire family is insured.

FREE INSPECTION OFFER

Anyone may provide the entire family with guaranteed life insurance containing double and triple indemnity payment clauses. Find out now how to insure your entire family while you can do it for only $1 a month.

SEND NO MONEY

Simply mail the coupon below. You will receive, without obligation, the actual Policy to read over at your leisure. Then, after you have looked it over, pay $1 if you wish, to put it in force. No agent will call. You decide entirely for yourself. Mail the coupon today.

AS PLAINLY STATED IN THE POLICY

THE FAMILY GROUP IS INSURED UP TO

$1,000
MAXIMUM—For Natural or Ordinary Death

$2,000
MAXIMUM—For Accidental Death by Auto

$3,000
MAXIMUM—For Accidental Death by Travel

Premiums divided equally between number insured and benefits graded according to attained age.

FREE POLICY COUPON

WESTMINSTER LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
2222 Diversey Blvd., Dept. 50-B, Chicago, Illinois

Please send me at once the actual Westminster Family Group Life Insurance Policy for FREE INSPECTION. I am under no obligation.

I hereby apply to the Westminster Life Insurance Company, Chicago, Ill. for a Family Group Policy.

LIST MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY GROUP
(Please Print Names)

Name.....*Age*.....*Name*.....*Age*.....

Name.....*Age*.....*Name*.....*Age*.....

Name.....*Age*.....*Name*.....*Age*.....

I hereby represent that the above are in good health, have no physical or mental impairments, and that the information forwarded here is correct.

.....
Signature of Applicant or Parent

.....
Street Address or R F D — City or Town — State

THIS COUPON IS FREE! It won't cost you one cent to see the actual policy. You don't deposit even one penny and you are under no obligation at all. Do not send any money with this coupon. No medical examination required—no agent will call.

(Continued from page 126)

nor of Nebraska in 1912, being defeated because he opposed prohibition and gave an exhibition of why prohibition, if enforced, would be a blessing to at least one individual. But Jim Dahlman was as square as a die, and no one ever even suggested that he soiled his hands with tainted money.

John Maher was commissioned major during World War No. 1, and after its close engaged in the life insurance business in Lincoln, amassing a fortune and retiring about 1930. His latter years were spent abroad, dying in Switzerland about two years ago.

Addison E. Sheldon, secretary of the Nebraska Historical Society, was publishing a Populist weekly newspaper at Chadron at the time of the race, later serving as a Populist member of the Nebraska Legislature. It may be interesting to note that Dwight Griswold, now Governor of Nebraska, is a resident of Chadron, and as a very small boy saw the start of that race. Chadron, then a straggling village, is now a fine city of 5,000 population, on the division of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad from Omaha to the Black Hills.

I knew personally "Rattlesnake Pete" Stephens, Doc Middleton, Dave Douglas and John Berry. Upstanding, square shooting plainsmen. Even Doc Middleton, with a somewhat oblique reputation, was known to be a man of his word, and unlike Bill Hickok he always gave the other man an even break.

Thanks to *Adventure* for giving me the information I sought, and for recalling vividly memories of a saga of the west.

BOOK NOTES:—We've just read "Two Ends to Our Shoestring," Kathrene Pinkerton's autobiography of a couple who made a success of not settling down. Remember when she and her husband, Robert, were collaborating on yarns that kept finding their way into *Adventure*? This new book, published by Harcourt, Brace, one of the most thoroughly satisfying bits of personal history we've encountered in years, should be on the "must" list of every reader of this magazine. On page 46, for instance, you'll learn how Kathrene and Bob made their first sale to Arthur Hoffman and what they did with the money. They were marooned in a Canadian wilderness cabin when the *Adventure* check came along. And scattered through the whole volume you'll find references to ASH and various of the old-time writers who helped build our magazine. It's a grand job! . . . Donald Barr Chidsey, whose "It Happened to Be Cats" was in the January issue, ambled in the other day. He's been in the South Seas for the past five years, living most of that time in Tahiti. He is under contract to do a biography of John L. Sullivan. Reference material on the one and only John L. is pretty scarce in Papeete, it seems. . . . Carl D. Lane, whose "Arctic Smoke" we printed back in the January '41 issue, has just written "What the Citizen Should Know About the Merchant Marine." W. W. Norton & Co. publish it. . . . Fairfax Downey's "Indian Fighting Army" is even better than we thought it was going to be, and from the sample chapters we published here we had an idea it would be pretty close to tops. Scribners have done a swell job of publishing, larding Mr. Downey's meaty text lavishly with reproductions of paintings by Frederick Remington, Charles Schreyvogel, R. F. Zogbaum and others, and anyone interested in having a vivid pictorial as well as word's-eye view of the men who carved our great West out of Indian Territory should own it. . . . Charles Edward Chapel, whose "Guns of Glory," an article on the various types of muskets and rifles used down through the years in our army, and which we published in the June '40 issue, has two recent books out which should be of interest to any *Adventure* reader whose hobby is guns. One is "The Gun Collector's Handbook of Values," a comprehensive catalogue and index of weapons and their current market prices. It is published by the author. The other is "Finger Printing," a manual of identification explaining the science of finger printing, giving its history and showing how it is used today in the detection of crime. It is published by Coward-McCann. Lieutenant Chapel, incidentally, has promised us a companion article to "Guns of Glory" on the hand gun. We hope to have it soon. . . . And don't forget "Murder, Chop, Chop"—the book title Morrow & Co. have given James Norman's "Viva China!"—K. S. W.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

Five big round-up outfits were camped within a few miles of one another on the wide flat strip of cow country called Sun Prairie, Montana. Each outfit had its own mess wagon and bed wagon, its own remuda of saddle horses, its horse wrangler and nighthawk, cook and crew of cowhands. Each round-up crew consisted of about twenty-five men who took orders from a wagon-boss. If ever a ruckus started, and there was some betting going on that there would be a gun ruckus before the range was worked, it would really be one for the cow history book.

It started all right, and Walt Coburn tells you about how it ended in his new novelette—

"ROUND-UP AT SUN PRAIRIE"

Take a hardboiled, bred-in-the-bone cavalryman, force him to trade his saddle for a seat on several clanking tons of steel that feed on high-test gas instead of oats and hay and all hell is apt to pop. That's just what happens in "Tanks Ain't Horses" by Frederick Wilkins, a glorious yarn of our new mechanized forces; Walter Havighurst's "First Command" is a stirring tale of the merchant convoys; "Joe Tom" by Thomas H. Raddall, an unusual story of gold mining in the Canadian Maritime Provinces; then there's the next installment of F. R. Buckley's gripping "Live by the Sword" plus other great fact and fiction features and the usual departments found only in—

Adventure

On Sale March 11

It's Easy To Be A Contractor

Learn to estimate, to plan buildings, to take contracting jobs; and make money on them. Here are 9 up-to-the-minute books on building, estimating, and contracting which cover in an interesting way, the subjects that carpenters, builders, and contractors should know to make the most out of their jobs. Roof Framing, The Steel Square, Architectural Drawing and Design, Estimating, Painting and Decorating, Heating, Air Conditioning, Building, Contracting, Concrete Forms and other subjects are all well covered.

"Boss" Carpenters in Demand

Vast public works jobs, immense projects, and the rapid growth of home building, are making jobs for MEN WHO KNOW HOW. These books give you quick training. With them you shouldn't be afraid to tackle any job, for needed facts can be found in a hurry.

Up-to-Date EDITION

These books are the most up-to-date, complete we have ever published on these subjects.

Coupon Brings Nine Books FREE For Examination

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY (Publishers—Home Study Courses)
Dept. G331, Drexel at 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois

You may ship me the Up-to-Date edition of your nine big books, "Building, Estimating, and Contracting" without any obligation to buy. I will pay the delivery charges only, and if fully satisfied in ten days, I will send you $2.00, and after that only $3.00 a month, until the total price of only $39.80 is paid. I am not obligated in any way unless I keep the books.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Please attach a letter stating your age, occupation, employer's name and address, and that of at least one business man as a reference.

Asthma Agony

Don't rely on smokes, sprays and injections if you suffer from terrible recurring, choking, gasping, wheezing spells of Asthma. Thousands of sufferers have found that the first dose of Mendaco usually palliates Asthma spasms and loosens thick strangling mucus, thus promoting freer breathing and more restful sleep. Get Mendaco in tasteless tablets from druggists. Only 60c. Money back guaranteed unless fully satisfied.

Can You Equal This Home for $1095

Shipped Direct from Our Mill

Save 30% to 40% on Your New Home..

WE PAY FREIGHT

Don't pay several hundred dollars more than necessary when you build a home! Buy it direct from our mill at our low factory price. We ship you the materials—lumber cut-to-fit, ready to erect. Paint, glass, hardware, nails, etc., all included in the price—no extra charges. We pay the freight. Plans furnished—also complete building instructions. No wonder our customers write us that we saved them 30% to 40%, compared with builders' prices. Easy terms—monthly payments.

Send for FREE BOOK of Liberty Homes

HANDSOME BIG CATALOGUE **FREE**

Pictures wonderful homes in colors at money-saving prices. Designs to suit everyone.

Write for your catalogue today

LEWIS MANUFACTURING CO.
Dept. 2328 Bay City, Michigan

3 Questions

only you can answer:

1. DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU EVER SAW THE COUPON BELOW?
2. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS YOU'VE MADE IN YOUR WORK SINCE THEN?
3. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Only you can answer those questions. But before you answer No. 3, read this: During the past 50 years, more than four million men have mailed that same coupon and enrolled for low-cost I. C. S. training — and thousands of them have become top-notchers and key-men in business and industry. Right now, 100,000 men are studying modern I. C. S. Courses in 400 different subjects. It isn't too late for YOU to mail this coupon, and learn how you can become a TRAINED MAN, making a trained man's pay!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

BOX 3279-J, SCRANTON, PENNA.

★ Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X: ★

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Air Brake
☐ Air Conditioning
☐ Airplane Drafting
☐ Architectural Drafting
☐ Architecture
☐ Auto Engine Tune-up
☐ Auto Technician
☐ Aviation ☐ Aviation Mechanic
☐ Boilermaking
☐ Bridge Engineering
☐ Chemistry
☐ Civil Engineering
☐ Coal Mining
☐ Concrete Engineering
☐ Contracting and Building
☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Diesel Engines
☐ Electrical Drafting
☐ Electrical Engineering
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Foundryman ☐ Heating
☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
☐ Highway Engineering
☐ House Planning
☐ Industrial Metallurgy
☐ Locomotive Engineer
☐ Machinist
☐ Management of Inventions
☐ Marine Engines
☐ Mechanical Drafting
☐ Mechanical Engineering
☐ Mine Foreman
☐ Navigation
☐ Patternmaking ☐ Plumbing
☐ Practical Telephony
☐ Public Works Engineering
☐ Pulp and Paper Making
☐ Radio, General
☐ Radio Operating
☐ Radio Servicing
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ R. R. Signalman ☐ Refrigeration
☐ Sanitary Engineering
☐ Sheet Metal Work
☐ Ship Drafting
☐ Shipfitting ☐ Shop Practice
☐ Steam Electric ☐ Steam Engines
☐ Steam Fitting
☐ Structural Drafting
☐ Structural Engineering
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ Telegraph Engineering
☐ Telephone Work
☐ Textile Designing
☐ Toolmaking ☐ Welding
☐ Woolen Manufacturing

BUSINESS COURSES

☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Business Management
☐ Cartooning ☐ Civil Service
☐ College Preparatory
☐ Commercial
☐ Commercial Illustrating
☐ Cost Accounting
☐ C. P. Accounting
☐ First Year College
☐ Foremanship ☐ French
☐ Good English
☐ High School
☐ Managing Men at Work
☐ Railway Postal Clerk
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Secretarial ☐ Spanish
☐ Showcard and Sign Lettering
☐ Traffic Management

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

☐ Advanced Dressmaking
☐ Foods and Cookery
☐ Home Dressmaking
☐ Professional Dressmaking and Designing
☐ Tea Room and Cafeteria Management, Catering

Name.....*Age*.....*Address*.....

City.....*State*.....*Present Position*.....

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada
British residents send coupon to I. C. S., 71 Kingsway, London, W. C. 2, England

World's Largest Dental Plate Makers

FALSE TEETH

Posed by a Professional Model

MADE-TO-MEASURE DENTAL PLATES *by* MAIL

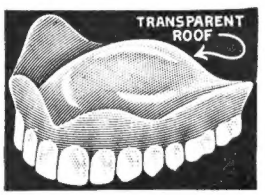
Direct from our Laboratory to you

$7.95 TO $35

MAIL COUPON

We make to measure for you INDIVIDUALLY ... **BY MAIL** Dental Plates for men and women from an impression of your mouth taken by you at your home. Thousands all over the country wear teeth we made for them—by mail!

SEND NO MONEY!



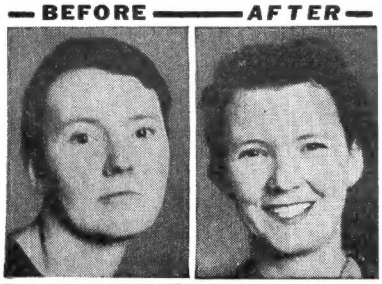
ROOFLESS

PART'AL

At Rock-Bottom Prices

If you find out what others have paid for theirs, you will be astounded when you **see how little ours will cost you.** By reading our catalog you will learn how to **save HALF** or **MORE** on Dental Plates for yourself ... **Monthly Payments Possible!**

— BEFORE — — AFTER —



ELSIE BOLAND OF NORTON, KANSAS, writes: "Enclosed find two pictures. One shows how I looked before I got my teeth; the other one afterwards. Your teeth are certainly beautiful."

Harry Willoughby, Adairville, Ky., writes: "I've received my teeth and am proud of them."

●The foregoing are a few of thousands of unsolicited testimonials in our files. We don't imply that you will obtain the same results ... What is IMPORTANT TO YOU is WE GUARANTEE your MONEY BACK if you are not 100% satisfied.

On 60 Days' Trial! MAKE US PROVE EVERY WORD WE SAY—Wear our teeth on trial for as long as 60 days. Then, if you are not PERFECTLY SATISFIED with them, THEY WILL NOT COST YOU A CENT. We'll take your word!

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE of SATISFACTION

We take this risk. We guarantee that if you are not fully satisfied with the teeth we make for you, then, any time within 60 days we will gladly refund every cent you paid us for them.

A DENTIST SUPERVISES THE MAKING OF EACH DENTAL PLATE.

FREE Impression material—catalog with our New LOW Prices, and information. Don't put this off. Do it today!

FREE U. S. DENTAL CO., Dept. 3-87
1555 Milwaukee Av., Chicago

Send without obligation FREE impression material, catalog and information.

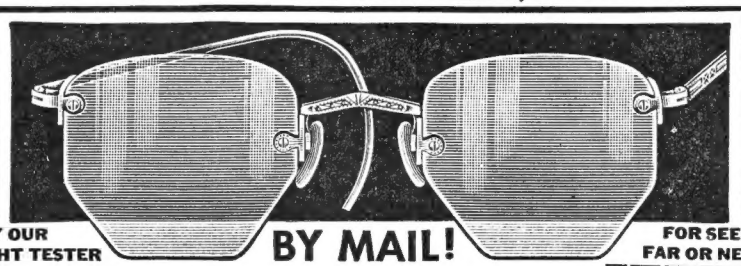
NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____

U.S. Dental Co., 1555 Milwaukee Av. Dept. 3-87, Chicago

LATEST



STYLES

$2.95 ● & UP Complete

TRY OUR SIGHT TESTER

BY MAIL!

FOR SEEING FAR OR NEAR!

SEND... No Money

GRACE YOUR FACE *with* GOOD-LOOKING GLASSES ... Select for yourself from the many styles in our catalog the one that looks best on you. Get yours on a

16 DAYS' TRIAL You be the sole judge ... Wear our Glasses On Trial AS LONG AS 16 DAYS with a

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION! Then, if you are not 100% satisfied with glasses we make for you, we will refund every cent you paid us for them.

HIGH Quality Material, Expert Workmanship. All our lenses are genuine Toric—the frames are made of dainty engraved Rhodium or finest 1/10-12 Karat gold filled. Expert opticians make our glasses for you.

Prescriptions for Glasses Filled

● BROKEN GLASSES REPAIRED—*48-Hour Service.*

FREE CATALOG & INFORMATION

U.S. Eye-Glasses Co., 1557 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. 3-87, Chicago, Ill.

FREE U.S. Eye-Glasses Co., Dept. 3-87
1557 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Send without obligation, your FREE catalog and information.

NAME_____
PRINT NAME CLEARLY

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____

AUDELS NEW MACHINISTS HANDYBOOK NOW READY!

Prepare!

A KEY TO MODERN SHOP PRACTICE

PRACTICAL INSIDE INFORMATION

For Every Machinist, Toolmaker, Engineer, Machine Operator, Mechanical Draughtsman, Metal Worker, Mechanic or Student. This 1600 Page Handy Book Covers Modern Machine Shop Practice in All Its Branches.

A COMPLETE INSTRUCTOR WITH READY REFERENCE INDEX

New from Cover to Cover. Tells How to Operate and Set Up Lathes, Screw & Milling Machines, Shapers, Drill Presses & All Other Machine Tools.

5 PRACTICAL BOOKS IN ONE!
60 FULLY ILLUSTRATED CHAPTERS

Covering: **1**—Modern Machine Shop Practice. **2**—Blue Print Reading and How to Draw. **3**—Calculations & Mathematics for Machinists. **4**—Shop Physics. **5**—How to Use the Slide Rule.

1600 PAGES
FULLY ILLUSTRATED

A SHOP COMPANION THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Easy to read and understand—flexible covers—Handy size 5 x 6½ x 2—a ready reference that answers your questions accurately.

TO GET THIS ASSISTANCE FOR YOURSELF SIMPLY FILL IN AND MAIL COUPON TODAY

$4 COMPLETE
PAY $1 A MO.

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 W. 23rd St., New York

ASK TO SEE IT!

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 West 23rd St., New York

Mail AUDELS MACHINISTS & TOOLMAKERS HANDY BOOK, Price $4 on 7 Days Free Trial. If O. K. I will remit $1 in 7 days and $1 Monthly until $4 is Paid. Otherwise I will return it.

Name_____

Address_____

Occupation_____

Reference_____ PER